طہارت قلب

PURIFICATION OF THE HEART

Hadrat Maulānā Shāh Wasīyyullāh Sāhib's important articles on the subjects of hypocrisy, pride, anger, selfconceit and jealousy; and an effective treatment for them.

HAZRAT MAULĀNĀ
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PUBLISHER'S NOTE

By the grace and kindness of Allāh *taʿālā*, Maktabah Dār al-Maʿārif, Allāhābād, is continuing with its work, under whose auspices several worthy and valuable books have been published and made available to the public. Some of these books, e.g. *Tarbīyyat-e-Aulād Kā Islāmī Nizām, Guldastah-e-Adhkār, Haqīqī Hajj, Dars-e-Qur'ān, Nikāh ki Sharʿī Haythīyyat, Chand Wasīyyate*, have been translated into English and Gujarati and published. The book, *Tarbīyyat-e-Aulād Kā Islāmī Nizām*, has also been translated into the Bengali language and will – *inshā Allāh* – be printed soon. All praise is due solely to Allāh *taʿālā*.

The book, *Tat-hīr al-Qulūb min ar-Radhā'il wa al-ʿUyūb*, also known as *Purification of the Heart* is now before the reader. It contains three themes explained by Muslihul Ummat Hadrat Maulānā Shāh Wasīyyullāh Sāhib *quddisa sirruhu*. The three themes are: (1) hypocrisy, (2) pride, and (3) anger. He explains the repugnance and abhorrence of these evils, and shows the way to save one's self from them.

I addition to this, my respected father, Hadrat Maulānā Muhammad Qamaruz Zamān Sāhib *dāmat barakātuhum*, writes about evils such as vanity and jealousy, and provides a convincing

treatment for them. We hope this will be a valuable treasure for those treading the path of the *t̠arīqah*.

I received the full support and assistance of my brother, Maulānā ʿUbaydullāh Nadwī, Maulānā Fīroz ʿAlam Qāsimī and Maulānā Maqs̠ūd Ah̠mad Qāsimī (all of whom are teachers at Madrasah ʿArabīyyah Bayt al-Maʿārif Allāhābād) in the preparation of this book. May Allāh *taʿālā* reward all of them with the best of rewards.

Muh̠ammad ʿAbdullāh Qamaruz Zamān Qāsimī Allāhābādī
Maktabah Dār al-Maʿārif Allāhābād
1 Rajab al-Murajjab 1427 A.H.
28 July 2006

INTRODUCTION

الحمد لله الذي زين صور الإنسان بحسن تقويمه وتقديره، وحرسه من الزيادة والنقصان في شكله ومقاديره، وفوض تحسين الأخلاق إلى اجتهاد العبد وتشميره، واستحثه على تهذيبه بتخويفه وتحذيره، ونشهد أن لا إله إلا الله وحده لا شريك له ونشهد أن سيدنا ومولانا محمدا عبده ورسوله الذي كان يلوح أنوار النبوة من بين أساريره، ويستشرف حقيقة الحق من مخايله وتباشيره، صلى الله عليه وعلى اله وأصحابه الذين طهروا وجه الإسلام من ظلمه الكفر ودياجيره، وحسموا مآدة الباطل فلم يتدنسوا بقليله ولا بكثيره.
أما بعد:

The *Dīn* of Islam is based on the foundation of good character and places a lot of value to it. There are many Qur'ānic verses and countless Ahādīth in praise of good conduct. In like manner, many Hadīth collections contain Ahādīth wherein bad character is disliked and abhorred.

The following statement of Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* is sufficient to demonstrate the high position of good character. He said:

بُعِثْتُ لِأُتَمِّمَ مَكَارِمَ الْأَخْلَاقِ

I have been commissioned [as a Prophet] to perfect good character.

He also made the following supplication to Allāh *taʿālā*:

اَللّٰهُمَّ كَمَا أَحْسَنْتَ خَلْقِيْ فَأَحْسِنْ خُلُقِيْ

O Allāh! Beautify my character just as you beautified my appearance.

There was no sign whatsoever of good character in the era before Rasūlullāh sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam which is known as *jāhilīyyah*. Corruption had spread all around. Peace and tranquillity had departed and were gone missing. Allāh *taʿālā* then sent Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* as a mercy for the entire world. He says in this regard:

وَمَا أَرْسَلْنٰكَ إِلَّا رَحْمَةً لِّلْعَالَمِيْنَ

We sent you solely as a mercy to the worlds.

An Allāh-loving poet conveys this as follows:

> The dry arid land has been moistened by the rains. In other words, the mercy to the worlds has arrived.

Allāh *taʿālā* says with absolute emphasis:

إِنَّكَ لَعَلٰى خُلُقٍ عَظِيْمٍ

You are most certainly on the highest pedestal of good character.

The genuine Sufis are the deputies of Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* and his inheritors. They imbibed the sublime character of Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* and were illuminated by his spiritual light. They also laid special emphasis on the rectification of character. They first rectified and reformed their own hearts, and then steered their associates and friends towards it. Instead of sufficing with this, they expressed their displeasure when they saw any failings and weaknesses in this regard. So much so, someone from among them said:

اَلتَّصَوُّفُ هُوَ الْأَخْلَاقُ

Tasawwuf is essentially good character.

This is why in the latter times, special attention was given to rectification of character and purification of the soul by Hadrat Hakīmul Ummat Maulānā Ashraf ʿAlī Thānwī *quddisa sirruhu* and Hadrat Muslihul Ummat Maulānā Shāh Wasīyyullāh Sāhib Fatahpūrī Allāhābādī *rahimahullāh*. The essential ingredient of their *khānqāhs* was excessive *dhikr* and good character. They did not confine themselves to encouraging and emphasising the *dhikr* of Allāh *taʿālā* alone, but to good character as well. If any associate wrote to them informing them of their conditions, *dhikr* and other spiritual exercises, the reply would be given: "All this is very good, but what is the condition of your character?"

Thus, if through *dhikrullāh*, the wealth of affinity with Allāh *taʿālā* (*nisbat*) develops in the heart, and it results in strength and lustre; then through good character one gets the capability of acquiring this affinity with Allāh *taʿālā*. This is why Shaykh al-ʿUlamā' Hadrat Hājī Imdādullāh Sāhib *rahimahullāh* used to say: "The ability to acquire affinity with Allāh *taʿālā* cannot be developed without rectification of character." This is why special attention has to be paid to both.

It was most probably around the year 1937 when Hadrat Muslihul Ummat *rahimahullāh*, acting under the instruction of Hadrat Hakīmul Ummat *rahimahullāh*, came to Fatahpūr, Tālnarjā, district Mau. He assessed the conditions of the people and

found that they were immersed in immoralities, especially hypocrisy. So he began explaining the Qur'ānic verses which were revealed as reprimands to the conditions of the hypocrites, and the many Aḫādīth which described their evil ways. At the same time, he spent a lot of time explaining to them the themes related to merits of good character and disparagement of bad character as mentioned in *Iḫyā' al-ʿUlūm* of Ḫujjatul Islam Imām Ghazzālī *raḫimahullāh*, *Ḫujjatullāh al-Bālighah, Tafhīmāt Ilāhīyyah* and *al-Fauz al-Kabīr* of Ḫaḏrat Shāh Walī Allāh Muḫaddith Dehlawī *raḫimahullāh*. He also wrote a booklet titled *Taḫdhīr al-ʿUlamā' ʿan Khiṣāl as-Sufahā'* which is considered to be a unique work on the qualities and signs of hypocrisy. Ḫaḏrat Maulānā Sayyid Ẕuhūr al-Ḫasan Ṣāḫib *raḫimahullāh* had this booklet printed and it was very well received. Inspiration is from Allāh *taʿālā* alone.

Apart from this, he would speak a lot about self conceit and pride. He would constantly say that pride is an illness which deprives a person from many excellent qualities. He would also say with regard to anger: Anger is something which not only harms a person's Hereafter, but also his worldly matters such as his trade and business, and his health. Anger is an illness which does not leave a person.

Ḫaḏrat Muṣliḫul Ummat *raḫimahullāh* has detailed works on these evils and they are to be found in book form in *Risālah Maʿrifat Ḫaqq* and *Waṣīyyatul ʿIrfān*, both of which have been printed and published. They are now being printed together.

Purification of the heart

Purification of the heart holds a very lofty and elevated position because salvation in the Hereafter is dependent on it, and fathoming the secrets and mysteries of the Qur'ān is possible through it. Allāh *taʿālā* says:

لَا يَمَسُّهُ إِلَّا الْمُطَهَّرُوْنَ

None but the pure may touch it [the Qur'ān].

In his explanation to the above verse, Hadrat Maulānā Idrīs Kāndhlawī *rahimahullāh* writes in his *Maʿāriful Qur'ān*:

> The act of touching can be done with the hand. Thus, the prohibition of touching the Qur'ān without *wudū'* and purity is established from the Qur'ān itself. Another meaning of "touching" is the acquisition of a bond and affinity. We can thus understand from this that acquiring a bond and affinity with the sciences and facts of the Qur'ān will only be realized in favour of those who are pure in their character. As for the one whose heart is tainted by hypocrisy and bad character, he cannot acquire any bond and affinity with the sciences of the Qur'ān.[1]

This is why Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* made the following *duʿā'* for acquiring purification of the heart:

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[1] Maulānā Idrīs Kāndhlawī: *Maʿāriful Qur'ān*, vol. 7, p. 116.

اَللّٰهُمَّ طَهِّرْ قَلْبِيْ مِنَ النِّفَاقِ، وَعَمَلِيْ مِنَ الرِّيَاءِ، وَلِسَانِيْ مِنَ الْكَذِبِ، وَعَيْنِيْ مِنَ الْخِيَانَةِ، فَإِنَّكَ تَعْلَمُ خَائِنَةَ الْأَعْيُنِ وَمَا تُخْفِي الصُّدُوْرُ.

O Allāh! Purify my heart from hypocrisy, my deeds from ostentation, my tongue from lies, and my eyes from treachery. Surely You know the treachery of the eyes and what the chests conceal.

The following *duʿā’* is established from Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* upon the completion of *wudū’*:

اَللّٰهُمَّ اجْعَلْنِيْ مِنَ التَّوَّابِيْنَ وَاجْعَلْنِيْ مِنَ الْمُتَطَهِّرِيْنَ

O Allāh! Make me of those who repent, and those who are pure.

I think that "those who repent" refers to purity of the heart, and "those who are pure" refers to purity of the body. This is what Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* made *duʿā’* for, and this is what he taught the *ummah.*

The pious elders, *ʿulamā’* and *mashā'ikh* instruct their *murīds* (aspirants) and associates to make the following *duʿā’*:

اَللّٰهُمَّ طَهِّرْ قَلْبِيْ مِنْ غَيْرِكَ، وَنَوِّرْ قَلْبِيْ بِنُوْرِ مَعْرِفَتِكَ

O Allāh! Purify my heart from all apart from You, and illuminate my heart with the light of Your recognition.

Hadrat Muslihul Ummat *rahimahullāh* had taught the above *duʿā’* to Maulānā Qārī Siddīq Ahmad Sāhib Bāndwī *rahimahullāh* upon the latter's request.

The following excellent supplication is mentioned in the *Pand Nāmah* of Hadrat Khwājah ʿAttār *rahimahullāh*:

> O Allāh! Purify our hearts from all thoughts apart from Yours. Cure us from the ailments of the heart through Your grace and favour.

It was for the realization of this very cure and purification of the heart that Hadrat Muslihul Ummat *rahimahullāh* compiled *Wasīyyatul Akhlāq* when he came to Fatahpūr, Tālnarjā, district Mau. He provides useful information on following the Sunnah, recitation of the Qur'ān and *duʿā'*. In addition to this, he quoted forty Ahādīth on the merits of good character. These ought to be studied by every Muslim so that it becomes easy for him to practise on them.

A background to this book

(1) A booklet titled, *Ghussah aur us kā ʿilāj* (Anger and its cure), was written by Hadrat Muslihul Ummat *rahimahullāh* and published. My dear friend, Maulānā Idrīs Patel Sāhib of Ankleshwar had seen it and was very much impressed by it. He contacted my son, Maulwī Muhammad ʿAbdullāh, and said: "I found this booklet very useful, and I would like to have it printed at my cost." When my son conveyed this to me, I granted my permission, but at the same time, I thought to myself that if two other important writings of Hadrat Muslihul Ummat *rahimahullāh* on the subjects of hypocrisy and pride were to be included, then the nature of three important evil traits and their treatment will

be learnt and be of much benefit to the masses and the learned. This is why all three subjects are now being printed together.

The first discussion is on hypocrisy, followed by pride, and then anger. May Allāh *taʿālā* inspire us all to abhor these evils and to keep away from them. Āmīn.

(2) Since this book contains three very important reformational themes of H̲ad̲rat Mus̲lih̲ul Ummat *rah̲imahullāh*, I added two additional themes, viz. self-conceit and jealousy. This is why I gave the book the title *Tat̲-hīr al-Qulūb min ar-Radhā'il wa al-ʿUyūb* (Purification of the hearts from evil qualities and defects). May Allāh *taʿālā* make it a true representation of its title. In other words, may He make it a means for recognition of what is evil, provide insight into the defects of the self, and a means for purification and cleansing. Āmīn.

Prior to this, Maktabah Dār al-Maʿārif, Allāhābād, had printed a few important reformational books such as *Maʿārif S̲ūfīyyah, Shifā'-e-Dil*, etc. which were collections of many reformational themes. A study of these books will – *inshā Allāh* – prove very beneficial. It would be most appropriate for the *ʿulamā'* to include these books in their syllabi so that students could continue a system of spiritual training side by side with their education, graduate as practising *ʿulamā'* from the *madāris*, and be able to serve *Dīn* in the best manner.

(3) The last book written by Imām Ghazzālī *rah̲imahullāh* was *Minhāj al-ʿĀbidīn* in which he provides detailed explanations on praiseworthy and

evil characteristics and traits. In it, he relates the incident of an *ʿālim* who was deprived of the bounty of *īmān* solely because of his bad character. This is obviously a very admonitory and eye-opening incident for us. This incident has been quoted further on in the book together with the original Arabic text. We hope the reader will be impacted by it.

(4) In addition to the above-mentioned themes, H̲ad̲rat Mus̲lih̲ul Ummat *rah̲imahullāh* quoted Ah̲ādīth which are related to the theme of character. Forty of these Ah̲ādīth have been included at the beginning of this book under the heading, "Forty Ah̲ādīth Related to Character". It is hoped that this will apprise the reader with regard to the merits of good character and the abhorrence of evil character.

(5) Dr. ʿAbd al-Karīm Zaydān has written a book titled, *Us̲ul ad-Daʿwah* (The Principles of Propagation). His first discussion is titled *Niz̲ām al-Akhlāq fī al-Islam* (The System of Character in Islam), wherein he defines *akhlāq* (character), its importance and greatness. This discussion has been translated because of its immense benefit and elucidation.

(6) The responsibility of printing this important compilation was borne by Maulānā Muh̲ammad ʿAbdullāh Qāsimī. Transcribing the manuscripts onto computer was undertaken by Maulānā Fīroz ʿĀlam Qāsimī and Maulānā Muh̲ammad ʿUbaydullāh Nadwī. Maulānā Maqs̲ūd Ah̲mad S̲āh̲ib Qāsimī rendered sterling services in researching and correcting the text, and I am quite satisfied

with his work. Maulānā Abs̲ār al-H̲aq Mau'ī and Maulānā Maqbūl Ah̲mad Jaunpūrī S̲āh̲ib also did a thorough proof-reading, and this has added to my satisfaction [in the correctness of the text]. May Allāh *taʿālā* reward them all with the best of rewards.

The reader is probably aware that the publishing of the periodical, *Maʿrifat-e-H̲aq*, commenced in December 1963. It is also known that the printing and publishing of the teachings and guidelines of H̲ad̲rat Mus̲lih̲ul Ummat *rah̲imahullāh* are continuing – first in *Maʿrifat-e-H̲aq*, and then in the periodical, *Was̲īyyatul ʿIrfān*. Many of H̲ad̲rat Mus̲lih̲ul Ummat's *rah̲imahullāh* admonitory and eye-opening themes have already been published, and are still being published. The masses and scholars alike are benefiting from them.

My beloved son, Maulānā Mah̲būb Ah̲mad Nadwī, felt that all these themes and sayings which are scattered like pearls in different editions and issues of these periodicals ought to be collated and published under separate themes. This will prove to be far more useful.

When he shared his thoughts with me, I also considered it to be a good idea. So I handed over this responsibility to Muftī Zayn al-Islam S̲āh̲ib Qāsimī and Maulānā Mah̲būb Ah̲mad Nadwī. They had to collate the different themes and articles which were scattered in the various published issues in one place so that it is easy for the reader. Consequently, themes from periodicals of about fifteen years have been separated, and they have

commenced transcribing them. May Allāh *taʿālā* enable them to complete this task. Āmīn.

On going through this treasure of themes, I think this series will extend over several volumes. I hope it will be of great benefit to the all sections of the *ummah*, especially the *ʿulamā'*. In fact, it will be a significant addition to the library of Islam – *inshā Allāh*. Āmīn.

I established "Idārah Maʿārif Muslihul Ummat" specifically to carry out this task. It is based in Dār-e-Saʿīd,[1] Karelī, Allāhābād. May Allāh *taʿālā* complete and perfect the benefit of this task, and may He accept it. Āmīn.

I now appoint Maulānā Maqsūd Ahmad Sāhib Qāsimī and Maulānā Nafīs Ahmad Sāhib Qāsimī, both of whom are teachers at Madrasah Bayt al-Maʿārif, Allāhābād, to assist Maulānā Mahbūb Ahmad Nadwī in carrying out this task. I delegate the tasks of transcribing and correcting the text to Maulānā Muhammad ʿUbaydullāh Nadwī and Maulānā Fīroz ʿĀlam Qāsimī. May Allāh *taʿālā* give them all the ability and inspiration to carry out these responsibilities in the best way possible. Āmīn. This is certainly not difficult for Allāh *taʿālā.*

Was salām
Muhammad Qamaruz Zamān Allāhābādī, *may Allāh pardon him.*
17 Rabīʿ ath-Thānī 1427 A.H./May 2006

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[1] *Māshā Allāh*, this house belongs to my beloved son, Maulānā Saʿīd Ahmad Nadwī. It is directly in front of Dār al-Maʿārif al-Islāmīyyah, Allāhābād, U.P. Occasionally, my guests are hosted in this house.

Bayt al-Adhkār, 639B, Wa<u>s</u>īyābād, Allāhābād.

EVALUATION

Maulānā Mujīb al-Ghaffār S̲āh̲ib
Shaykh al-H̲adīth, Madrasah Maz̲har al-ʿUlūm, Benares, U.P.

Knowledge of the principles and objectives of the Sharīʿah, insight into their underlying reasons, deep knowledge of the sources of the Sharīʿah, full cognizance of explanations as regards *Dīnī* and academic discussions accompanied by knowledge of the statements and references made my erudite *ʿulamā'* and scholarly *mashā'ikh*, a very strong memory, a truly vigilant temperament, extraordinary *īmānī* understanding and insight, a manifestation of prophetic character and affection for the creation despite possessing Allāh-bestowed awe, a man of determination, a great reformer of the *ummah*, a spiritual physician, an expert into the traps of the self, an explorer of the mind, an eminent *ʿālim*, one who had truly recognized Allāh *taʿālā*, a shaykh of the *mashā'ikh*, and a teacher of *ʿulamā'* – these were the qualities and attributes of my spiritual guide and master, H̲ad̲rat Maulānā Shāh Was̲īyyullāh S̲āh̲ib Fatah̲pūrī Allāhābādī, popularly known as Mus̲lih̲ul Ummat.

He was from among those pious elders of the recent past who realized a phenomenal reformational and spiritual reformation in cities, towns and villages through his sincere and devoted efforts. These were the fruits of his sincerity, devotion to Allāh *taʿālā*, and a sign of his acceptance in Allāh's court. All this was because of the pain and feeling which he had for Islam and Muslims.

My respected teacher, the great Muhaddith, Hadrat Maulānā Abul Ma'āthir Habīb ar-Rahmān Aʿzamī *rahimahullāh* writes in reference to him: "I testify that Hadrat's heart was filled with pain and concern for Islam and the Muslims."

He was very concerned about the rectification and reformation of the *ʿulamā'*. He followed strictly in the footsteps of Hadrat Hakīmul Ummat Maulānā Ashraf ʿAlī Thānwī *quddisa sirruhu* and was from among his most senior *khulafā'* (representatives). He enjoyed a distinguished position in knowledge, recognition of Allāh *taʿālā*, abstinence and asceticism, remembrance of Allāh *taʿālā*, reformation and training, emulation of the Sunnah, respect for the Sharīʿah, piety and spirituality. He surpassed many of his contemporaries in these qualities.

One of the reasons for this is that his method of rectification was most effective and unique for his time. His teachings and instructions even cause contemporary *ʿulamā'* to be impressed and enamoured by him. With his Allāh-bestowed insight and foresight, he used to say with absolute sincerity and earnestness: "All sections of the community – the masses and the elite – are suffering from chronic ailments." He would diagnose the illnesses, provide a scholarly response for their causes, and an effective treatment in a manner which would settle immediately in the patient's heart, cause him to acknowledge his illness, and enable him to turn his attention to its treatment.

Allāh *taʿālā* bestowed him with a very pure and delicate academic temperament. He was always engrossed in the mysteries and secrets of academic themes, and would take joy from their sweetness. First of all, he would be affected by admonitory themes himself, and then relate them to the *ʿulamā'* and others who were close to him. Sparks of the deep knowledge and erudition of his teacher, H̲ad̲rat Maulānā Muh̲ammad Anwar Shāh Kashmīrī *rah̲imahullāh*, were found in his academic statements. Since he was overwhelmed by an academic and investigative temperament, he would provide very powerful and cogent arguments in his *mawāʿiz̲* – as he did in his writings and compilations. When discussing an issue, he would never be satisfied until he had researched all angles to it, and come to a satisfactory conclusion. When conducting an assembly and discussing a certain issue, he would have the main books on the subject before him. The more intricate themes were discussed with and directed at the *ʿulamā'*. However, it was H̲ad̲rat's supernatural feat and a result of his sincerity that even the masses would listen to these discussions and be affected by them. Many of them would be reduced to tears.

In the course of his talks, H̲ad̲rat would shake the hearts of the audience, and in order to draw attention to their acts of heedlessness, he would reprimand them in his own unique tone of pain, affection and concern. This would have a major effect on the people. Each person would think that he was being directly addressed, and that H̲ad̲rat was displeased with him. H̲ad̲rat's assembly used to be immersed in awe and tranquillity.

Normally, Hadrat used to conduct an assembly every day, and he would deliver reformational themes according to the condition of the people. However, the essence of his entire system of education and training, and the fundamental theme of his *khānqāh* was the rectification of character. In other words, it was focussed on the cleansing and purification of reprehensible qualities and traits. He considered this to be the most important in the field of *sulūk* and training.

He felt that reaching Allāh *taʿālā* and attaining the rank of acceptance in His court were not possible without getting rid of the base qualities and evils of the *nafs* (self). Based on his foresight, he used to say: "The presence of evil character is the cause of the worldly and material destruction of the Muslims today." He considered evil qualities to be the cause of worldly and *Dīnī* corruption. Every *sālik* who came into his *khānqāh* was imposed on the rectification of character from the very first day. This is what he would teach and instruct, and this is what he would take him to task for. Hadrat considered the different devotional practices (*awrād wa waẕā'if*) to be useless without rectification of character.

If any associate wrote to him informing him of his conditions, *dhikr* and other spiritual exercises, the reply would be given: "All this is very good, but what is the condition of your character?"

The rectification of character was also the core and essence of the teachings and training of his shaykh, Hadrat Maulānā Ashraf ʿAlī Thānwī *rahimahullāh*. The *mashā'ikh* of the past also considered this to be

the most important. Hadrat ʿĀlim Rabbānī Maulānā Rashīd Ahmad Gangohī *rahimahullāh* says: "The elders of the past would first endeavour to remove evil character from their *murīds* so that the objective of reaching Allāh *taʿālā* becomes easy. However, the latter elders, especially those of our *silsilah* (spiritual chain) prefer excessive *dhikr* to the extent that evil qualities and character become subdued, while *dhikr* overwhelms everything else."

When it came to juristical issues, Hadrat Maulānā Thānwī *rahimahullāh* used to follow the latter day scholars a lot. However, based on his *ijtihād* (independent judgement) and insight, he preferred the way of the early scholars with regard to rectification of character, considered it to be more beneficial, and made it the modus operandi of his *khānqāh*. Our Hadrat Maulānā Shāh Wasīyyullāh Sāhib *rahimahullāh* initially adopted the same way in emulation of his shaykh [without checking the advantages or disadvantages of this system]. And later on, after further investigation, experience and independent judgement, he too came with the same conclusion and made it his way. He did not bother about the criticism of any person in this regard.

He undertook immense research on the evils of the *nafs* and wrote books on this subject so that people may come to know of them. He understood that a major reason for the absence of rectification of the *nafs* was a general ignorance about its defects. Obviously, as long as a person does not know his faults and defects, he will neither rectify them, nor come out of his world of deception.

Consequently, when he saw the people of his time (not only the masses, but even the *'ulamā'*) caught in the web of hypocrisy – where there internal self is different from what they portray – he spoke in detail on this evil with a very painful and concerned heart so that the *ummah* may learn what it is, and be saved from it. Hadrat wrote a very important and enlightening paper on this subject, which is soon to follow.

Similarly, he noticed the general prevalence of pride among the Muslims. Son with his father, and student with his teacher are displaying pride. So are the subjects before their rulers. To make matters worse, people are not even aware of the repugnance of this dangerous and destructive illness. They are neither worried about its consequences nor do they fear its harms. This is why they do not bother in the least about abstaining from it. Hadrat became concerned about this situation and warned the *ummah* through a powerful divinely inspired article.

In like manner, on seeing the destruction and havoc which is caused by anger, he wrote an article titled, *Anger and its treatment*.

The book before you, *Purification of the Heart*, contains all the above three important themes. It also contains two additional articles on the subject of self-conceit and jealousy which were compiled by the compiler of this book, my shaykh and mentor, Hadrat al-Ustādh Maulānā Muhammad Qamaruz Zamān Sāhib *dāmat barakātuhum*. Thus, this book contains five important subjects, and could be referred to as a "five-fold treasure of rectification".

May Allāh *taʿālā* crown this book with acceptance, may He perfect and complete its benefit, and make it an elixir of cure for those who are suffering from the above-mentioned evil characteristics. Āmīn.

All praise is due to Allāh *taʿālā*, the student and academic representative of Hadrat Muslihul Ummat, the inheritor of his sciences, the elucidator of his teachings, his *khalīfah* and also of Hadrat Baqīyyatus Salaf Maulānā Muhammad Ahmad Sāhib Partābgharī *rahimahullāh*, who holds the position of Maulānā Rūm *rahimahullāh*, and my teacher, shaykh and mentor; a man of insight in today's times, viz. Hadrat Maulānā Muhammad Qamaruz Zamān Sāhib Allāhābādī *dāmat barakātuhum*, has the same pain and concern for the *ummah* as did Hadrat Muslihul Ummat. He has written several valuable works on the subject of *sulūk, tasawwuf*, and purification and culturing of the souls. All praise due to Allāh *taʿālā*, he is still writing on these subjects, and showering his blessings through his excellent exhortations. In like manner, he has taken the responsibility of printing and publishing the beneficial works of Hadrat Muslihul Ummat *rahimahullāh* and various other *ʿulamāʾ* and scholars, and conveying them to all sections of the community. He seems to be divinely inspired in carrying out these tasks. The book before the reader is a blessed link from the same chain.

May Allāh *taʿālā* inspire us to derive benefit from the blessings and teachings of Hadrat Maulānā. Āmīn.

Undoubtedly, H̲ad̲rat has to be valued and we have to derive benefit from him. He holds a lofty position in the view of contemporary *mashā’ikh* as regards his intellectual and spiritual acumen. By the grace of Allāh *ta‛ālā*, his blessings are covering a large circle of the *ummah*. All praise is due to Allāh *ta‛ālā*.

The *‛ulamā’* of India, specifically, and *‛ulamā’* and *mashā’ikh* of other parts of the world refer to him constantly. This is the bounty and favour of Allāh *ta‛ālā* which He grants to whomever He wills.

We make *du‛ā’* that Allāh *ta‛ālā* accepts H̲ad̲rat’s efforts, gives him blessings in his life with good health and well-being, and enables the *ummah* to benefit from him. Āmīn.

This worthless student and aspirant,
Mujīb al-Ghaffār
14 Jumādā al-Ukhrā 1427 A.H.

FORTY AH̲ĀDĪTH ON CHARACTER

Selected by H̲ad̲rat Mus̲lih̲ul Ummat *rah̲imahullāh*

١. مَكَارِمُ الْأَخْلَاقِ مِنْ أَعْمَالِ الْجَنَّةِ.

1. Noble character is from among the actions of Paradise.

٢. أَكْمَلُ الْمُؤْمِنِيْنَ إِيْمَانًا أَحْسَنُهُمْ خُلُقًا وَخِيَارُكُمْ لِنِسَائِهِمْ.

2. The most perfect believers as regards *īmān* are those with the best character. And the best among you are those who display best character to their wives.

٣. اَلْخُلُقُ الْحَسَنُ يُذِيْبُ الْخَطَايَا كَمَا يُذِيْبُ الْمَاءُ الْجَلِيْدَ، وَالْخُلُقُ السُّوْءُ يُفْسِدُ الْعَمَلَ كَمَا يُفْسِدُ الْخَلُّ الْعَسَلَ.

3. Good character melts sins just as water melts ice. Evil character destroys good deeds just as vinegar spoils honey.

٤. إِنَّ الرَّجُلَ لَيُدْرِكُ بِحُسْنِ خُلُقِهِ دَرَجَةَ الْقَائِمِ بِاللَّيْلِ الظَّامِئِ بِالْهَوَاجِرِ.

4. By virtue of his good character, a man can reach the level of the one who spends the night in worship, and the one who fasts on hot days.

٥. إِنَّ الْمُسْلِمَ الْمُسَدِّدَ لَيُدْرِكُ دَرَجَةَ الصَّوَّامِ الْقَوَّامِ بِاٰيَاتِ اللهِ بِحُسْنِ خُلُقِهِ وَكَرَمِ ضَرِيْبَتِهِ.

5. An upright Muslim can attain the ranks of a person who fasts all the time and recites the verses of Allāh *taʿālā* [at night] by virtue of his good character and noble demeanour.

٦. إِنَّ الْعَبْدَ لَيَبْلُغُ بِحُسْنِ خُلُقِهِ عَظِيْمَ دَرَجَاتِ الْاٰخِرَةِ وَشَرَفَ الْمَنَازِلِ، وَإِنَّهُ لَضَعِيْفُ الْعِبَادَةِ، وَإِنَّهُ لَيَبْلُغُ بِسُوْءِ خُلُقِهِ أَسْفَلَ دَرَكِ جَهَنَّمَ، وَإِنَّهُ لَعَابِدٌ.

6. A servant reaches the great ranks of the Hereafter and lofty levels by virtue of his good character, even though he may be weak as regards acts of worship. And because of his bad character, he reaches the pits of the Hell-fire, even though he may be an ardent worshipper.

٧. مَا مِنْ شَيْءٍ يُوْضَعُ فِي الْمِيْزَانِ اَثْقَلُ مِنْ حُسْنِ الْخُلُقِ، فَإِنَّ صَاحِبَ حُسْنِ الْخُلُقِ لَيَبْلُغُ بِهِ دَرَجَةَ صَاحِبِ الصَّوْمِ وَالصَّلٰوةِ.

7. Nothing weightier than good character is placed on the scale [of deeds]. A person of good character reaches the rank of a person who keeps fast and performs <u>s</u>alāh constantly.

٨. إِنَّ مَحَاسِنَ الْأَخْلَاقِ مَخْزُوْنَةٌ عِنْدَ اللهِ تَعَالٰى، فَإِذَا أَحَبَّ اللهُ عَبْدًا مَنَحَهُ خُلُقًا حَسَنًا.

8. Good character is stored as a treasure by Allāh *taʿālā*. When Allāh *taʿālā* loves a servant, He bestows him with good character.

٩. إِنَّ هٰذِهِ الْأَخْلَاقَ مِنَ اللهِ تَعَالٰى، فَمَنْ أَرَادَ اللهُ بِهِ خَيْرًا مَنَحَهُ خُلُقًا حَسَنًا، وَمَنْ أَرَادَ بِهِ سُوْءًا مَنَحَهُ سَيِّئًا.

9. Character is from Allāh *taʿālā*. When Allāh *taʿālā* wills good for a person, He bestows him with good character. When He wills bad for a person, He bestows him with bad character.

١٠. إِنَّ مِنْ أَحَبِّكُمْ إِلَيَّ أَحْسَنُكُمْ أَخْلَاقًا.

10. The most beloved to me are those of you who are best in character.

١١. إِنَّ أَحَبَّكُمْ إِلَيَّ وَأَقْرَبَكُمْ مِنِّيْ فِي الْاٰخِرَةِ مَجَالِسَ مَحَاسِنُكُمْ أَخْلَاقًا، وَإِنَّ أَبْغَضَكُمْ إِلَيَّ وَأَبْعَدَكُمْ مِنِّيْ فِي الْاٰخِرَةِ مَسَاوِيْكُمْ أَخْلَاقاً الثَّرْثَارُوْنَ الْمُتَفَيْهِقُوْنَ الْمُتَشَدِّقُوْنَ.

11. The most beloved to me and closest to me in the Hereafter as regards a sitting place shall be those of you who possess the best character. The most detestable in my sight and furthest away from me in the Hereafter are those with bad character – who engage in futile conversations, who are longwinded and pompous in their speech.

١٢. إِنَّكَ امْرُؤٌ قَدْ أَحْسَنَ اللهُ خَلْقَكَ فَأَحْسِنْ خُلُقَكَ.

12. You are a person whose appearance Allāh *taʿālā* beautified. Now you must beautify your character.

١٣. إِنَّكُمْ لَا تَسْعَوْنَ النَّاسَ بِأَمْوَالِكُمْ، وَلٰكِنْ يَسَعُهُمْ مِنْكُمْ بَسْطَ الْوَجْهِ وَحُسْنَ الْخُلُقِ.

13. Your wealth is not so much so as to suffice people. However, your cheerfulness and good character can suffice all.

١٤. أَوْحَى اللهُ تَعَالٰى إِلٰى إِبْرَاهِيْمَ: يَا خَلِيْلِيْ، حَسِّنْ خُلُقَكَ وَلَوْ مَعَ الْكَافِرِ، تَدْخُلْ مَدَاخِلَ الْأَبْرَارِ، فَإِنَّ كَلِمَتِيْ سَبَقَتْ لِمَنْ حَسَّنَ خُلُقَهُ أَنْ أُظِلَّهُ فِيْ عَرْشِيْ وَأَنْ أُسْكِنَهُ حَظِيْرَةَ قُدْسِيْ وَأَنْ أُدْنِيَهُ مِنْ جِوَارِيْ.

14. Allāh *taʿālā* revealed to Ibrāhīm *ʿalayhis salām* saying: "O My dear friend! Beautify your character even when dealing with an unbeliever. If you do this, you will be included in the rank of the righteous. Surely My decree has surpassed in favour of the person who beautifies his character

that I will shade him in My Throne, give him a place in My sanctified enclosure, and bring him close in My neighbourhood.

١٥. أَلَا أُخْبِرُكُمْ بِمَنْ تُحْرَمُ عَلَيْهِ النَّارُ غَدًا، عَلٰى كُلِّ هَيِّنٍ لَيِّنٍ قَرِيْبٍ سَهْلٍ.

15. Should I not inform you of the one on whom the Hell-fire will be forbidden tomorrow [on the day of Resurrection]? It will be forbidden to every such person who is soft, ease-loving, approachable and easy going with people.

١٦. اَلْبِرُّ حُسْنُ الْخُلُقِ، وَالْإِثْمُ مَا حَاكَ فِيْ صَدْرِكَ، وَكَرِهْتَ أَنْ يَطَّلِعَ عَلَيْهِ النَّاسُ.

16. Piety is good character. Sin is what causes uneasiness in your heart, and you dislike people to become aware of it.

١٧. اَلْجَمَالُ فِي الرَّجُلِ اللِّسَانُ.

17. The beauty of a man lies in his tongue. (In other words, correct use of his tongue bestows him with beauty).

١٨. خِيَارُكُمْ أَحَاسِنُكُمْ أَخْلَاقًا اَلْمُوْطِئُوْنَ أَكْنَافًا، وَشِرَارُكُمْ اَلثَّرْثَارُوْنَ، الْمُتَفَيْهِقُوْنَ الْمُتَشَدِّقُوْنَ.

18. The best of you are those who have the best character; who are soft-natured. The worst of you are those who engage in futile conversations, who are longwinded and pompous in their speech.

١٩. خَيْرُ مَا أُعْطِيَ الرَّجُلُ الْمُؤْمِنُ خُلُقٌ حَسَنٌ، وَشَرُّ مَا أُعْطِيَ الرَّجُلُ قَلْبٌ سُوْءٌ فِيْ صُوْرَةٍ حَسَنَةٍ.

19. The best quality which a believer has been given is good character. The worst which a man has been given is a wicked heart [concealed in] a beautiful appearance.

٢٠. رأْسُ الْعَقْلِ بعْدَ الدِّيْنِ التَّوَدُّدُ إِلَى النَّاسِ وَاصْطِنَاعُ الْخَيْرِ إِلٰى كُلِّ بِرٍّ وَفَاجِرٍ.

20. After having *Dīn*, the essence of a person's intelligence lies in showing love to people and doing good to all types of people – whether pious or impious.

٢١. أَثْقَلُ شَيْءٍ فِيْ مِيْزَانِ الْمُؤْمِنِ خُلُقٌ حَسَنٌ، إِنَّ اللهَ يُبْغِضُ الْفَاحِشَ الْمُتَفَحِّشَ الْبَذِيَّ.

21. The weightiest thing in the scale of a believer will be good character. Allāh *taʿālā* detests the one who is shameless and obscene in speech.

٢٢. أَكْمَلُ الْمُؤْمِنِيْنَ إِيْمَانًا أَحْسَنُهُمْ خُلُقًا، اَلْمُوْطِئُوْنَ أَكْنَافًا، اَلَّذِينَ يَأْلِفُوْنَ وَيُؤْلِفُوْنَ، وَلَا خَيْرَ فِيْمَنْ لَا يَأْلِفُ وَلَا يُؤْلِفُ.

22. The most perfect believers as regards *īmān* are those with the best character. They are the ones who are soft-natured, who deal amiably with people and are themselves amiable. And there is no good in the one who does not treat people amiably and is not amiable himself.

٢٣. إِنَّ اللهَ يُحِبُّ مَعَالِي الْأَخْلَاقِ وَيَكْرَهُ سَفْسَافَهَا.

23. Allāh *taʿālā* most certainly loves lofty character, and dislikes base and ignoble character.

٢٤. لَا تَكُوْنُوْا عَوْنَ الشَّيْطَانِ عَلٰى أَخِيْكُمْ.

24. Do not be the helpers of Satan against your fellow brother. (In other words, do not join Satan who is our enemy, in ill-treating your fellow brother).

٢٥. عَلَيْكَ بِحُسْنِ الْخُلُقِ فَإِنَّ أَحْسَنَ النَّاسِ خُلُقًا أَحْسَنُهُمْ دِيْنًا.

25. Impose good character upon your self because the best people as regards character shall be the best as regards *Dīn*.

٢٦. عَلَيْكَ بِحُسْنِ الْخُلُقِ وَطُوْلِ الصَّمْتِ، فَوَالَّذِيْ نَفْسِيْ بِيَدِهِ، مَا تَجَمَّلَ الْخَلَائِقُ بِمِثْلِهِمَا.

26. Impose good character and lengthy periods of silence upon yourself. I take an oath in the name of the One in whose control is my life, the creations never embellished their selves with anything like these two qualities.

٢٧. عَلَيْكَ بِحُسْنِ الْكَلَامِ وَبَذْلِ الطَّعَامِ.

27. Impose on your self good speech and the habit of feeding people.

٢٨. أَخْلِصْ دِيْنَكَ، يَكْفِيْكَ الْقَلِيْلُ مِنَ الْعَمَلِ.

28. Develop sincerity in your *Dīn*, and a few good deeds will suffice you.

٢٩. إِنَّ اللّٰهَ تَعَالٰى لَا يَنْظُرُ إِلٰى صُوَرِكُمْ وَأَمْوَالِكُمْ، وَلٰكِنْ إِنَّمَا يَنْظُرُ إِلٰى قُلُوْبِكُمْ وَأَعْمَالِكُمْ.

29. Allāh *taʿālā* does not look at your appearances and your wealth. Rather, He looks at your hearts and deeds.

٣٠. إِنَّمَا الْأَعْمَالُ كَالْوِعَاءِ، إِذَا طَابَ أَسْفَلُهُ طَابَ أَعْلَاهُ، وَإِذَا فَسَدَ أَسْفَلُهُ فَسَدَ أَعْلَاهُ.

30. Deeds are like a utensil. If the bottom part of it is proper, the upper part will be proper. But if the bottom part is damaged, the upper part will be useless.

٣١. إِنَّ الْعَبْدَ إِذَا صَلَّى فِي الْعَلَانِيَةِ فَأَحْسَنَ وَصَلَّى فِي السِّرِّ فَأَحْسَنَ، قَالَ اللهُ تَعَالٰى: هٰذَا عَبْدِيْ حَقًّا.

31. When a person performs s̲alāh in an excellent manner in public and in private, Allāh *taʿālā* says: “This is My true slave.”

٣٢. تَمَامُ الْبِرِّ أَنْ تَعْمَلَ فِي السِّرِّ عَمَلَ الْعَلَانِيَةِ.

32. Perfection in piety means you must do in privacy what you do in public.

٣٣. صَلٰوةُ الرَّجُلِ تَطَوُّعًا حَيْثُ لَا يَرَاهُ النَّاسُ تَعْدِلُ صَلَاتَهُ عَلٰى أَعْيُنِ النَّاسِ خَمْسًا وَّعِشْرِيْنَ.

33. The optional s̲alāh of a person performed in a place where no one can see him is equal to twenty five s̲alāhs performed before people.

٣٤. طُوْبٰى لِلْمُخْلِصِيْنَ، أُولٰئِكَ مَصَابِيْحُ الْهُدٰى، تَنْجَلِيْ عَنْهُمْ كُلُّ فِتْنَةٍ ظَلْمَاءَ.

34. Glad tidings to the sincere and devoted ones. They are the lamps of guidance through whom every dark tribulation is dispersed.

٣٥. مَا تَقَرَّبَ الْعَبْدُ إِلَى اللهِ بِشَيْءٍ أَفْضَلُ مِنْ سُجُوْدٍ خَفِيٍّ.

35. A servant does not get close to Allāh *taʿālā* with anything more superior than a prostration done in privacy.

٣٦. مَنْ أَرَادَ مِنْكُمْ أَنْ لَا يَحُوْلَ بَيْنَهُ وَبَيْنَ قَلْبِهِ أَحَدٌ فَلْيَفْعَلْ.

36. The person who desires nothing to come between his self and his heart should do so.

٣٧. اَلسِّرُّ أَفْضَلُ مِنَ الْعَلَانِيَةِ، وَالْعَلَانِيَةُ لِمَنْ أَرَادَ الْإِقْتِدَاءَ.

37. Actions done in privacy are better than those done in public. Actions in public are for the one who wants others to emulate him.

٣٨. لَوْ أَنَّ أَحَدَكُمْ يَعْمَلُ فِيْ صَخْرَةٍ صَمَّاءَ لَيْسَ لَهَا بَابٌ وَلَا كُوَّةٌ، لَخَرَجَ عَمَلُهُ لِلنَّاسِ كَائِنًا مَا كَانَ.

38. If any of you were to do a deed in a sealed rock which neither has any entrance nor any hole, it [his deed] will be exposed to people irrespective of the nature of the deed [whether good or bad].

٣٩. مَا أَسَرَّ عَبْدٌ سَرِيْرَةً إِلَّا أَلْبَسَهُ اللهُ رِدَاءَهَا، إِنْ خَيْرًا فَخَيْرٌ، وَإِنْ شَرًّا فَشَرٌّ.

39. When a person does a deed in secrecy, Allāh *taʿālā* most certainly makes him wear the sheet of that private deed. If it was a good deed, he is made to wear a good sheet. If it was an evil deed, he is made to wear a bad sheet.

٤٠. مَنْ أَحْسَنَ فِيْ مَا بَيْنَهُ وَبَيْنَ اللهِ، كَفَاهُ اللهُ مَا بَيْنَهُ وَبَيْنَ النَّاسِ، وَمَنْ أَصْلَحَ سَرِيْرَتَهُ، أَصْلَحَ اللهُ عَلَانِيَتَهُ.[1]

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[1] كنز العمال، ج٣، ص ٢–٢٥.

40. If a person does good in whatever is between himself and Allāh *taʿālā*, then Allāh *taʿālā* suffices for him in setting right his affairs with people. If a person rectifies his internal self, Allāh *taʿālā* rectifies his external self. (*Wasīyyatul Akhlāq*)

Note:

From the above Ahādīth, we can gauge the merits of good character, and we learn how much we are encouraged to adopt it. Similarly, we learn the repugnance of bad character, and how much it is stressed on us to abstain from it. It is up to us to now decide on what we want to do. I think every person will make a firm resolution to adopt good character and become eligible for the lofty ranks in the Hereafter. (Qamaruz Zamān)

DEFINITION OF AKHLĀQ

Dr. ʿAbd al-Karīm Zaydān has written a book titled, *U<u>s</u>ul ad-Daʿwah* (The Principles of Propagation). His first discussion is titled *Ni<u>z</u>ām al-Akhlāq fī al-Islam* (The Islamic System of Character), wherein he defines *akhlāq* (character), its importance and greatness. We are quoting the translation of what he wrote.

اَلْخُلُقُ فِي اللُّغَةِ اَلطَّبْعُ وَالسَّجِيَّةُ، وَفِي اصْطِلَاحِ الْعُلَمَاءِ كَمَا يُعَرِّفُهُ الْغَزَالِيُّ عِبَارَةٌ عَنْ هَيْئَةٍ فِي النَّفْسِ رَاسِخَةٍ، عَنْهَا تَصْدُرُ الْأَفْعَالُ بِسُهُوْلَةٍ وَيُسْرٍ مِنْ غَيْرِ حَاجَةٍ إِلٰى فِكْرٍ وَرَوِيَّةٍ.

The literal meaning of the word khuluq is "one's innate nature and habit". And according to the ʿulamāʾ, as defined by Imām Ghazzālī, khuluq refers to a condition which is firmly embedded in the self, and from which actions issue forth with ease and spontaneity, without any need to think and ponder over them.

Akhlāq can also be defined as follows: It is a conglomeration of such internal capabilities and attributes which have become firmly embedded in the self, through whose light and criterion, a person may consider an action to be good or bad. Based on this criterion, he will either carry out that action or abstain from it.

The position of *akhlāq* in Islam

Character enjoys a laudable position in Islam, and this is manifested in various ways. We list some of these ways below:

(1) The aim and objective of prophet-hood and messenger-ship has been specified as the setting

right of character and the proliferation of noble characteristics. As stated in a Hadīth:

إِنَّمَا بُعِثْتُ لِأُتَمِّمَ مَكَارِمَ الْأَخْلَاقِ

I have been commissioned for the perfection of noble character.

(2) *Dīn* has been defined as good character as mentioned in a Hadīth: A Sahābī came to Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* and asked: "What is *Dīn*?" He replied: "Good character."

This means that good character is a great pillar of Islam without which *Dīn* cannot exist. In the absence of good character, there can be no *Dīn* just as there can be no hajj without *wuqūf* at ʿArafāt.[1]

The position of character in *Dīn* is the same as *wuqūf* at ʿArafāt in hajj. Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* said in this regard:

اَلْحَجُّ عَرَفَةٌ

Hajj is ʿArafah.

In other words, the most essential pillar of hajj without which hajj will not be valid is the *wuqūf* at ʿArafāt.

(3) Good character is the thing which will be weightiest on the scale on the day of Resurrection. A Hadīth states that Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* said: "The fear of Allāh *taʿālā* and good

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[1] The essential pillar of hajj is to spend some time in ʿArafāt on the 9th of Dhū al-Hijjah. This is known as *wuqūf*. Hajj is not valid without it.

character will be the weightiest of all the things which will be placed on the scale on the day of Resurrection."

(4) Some believers surpass others in different aspects. Those who will surpass all as regards the level of *īmān* will be the ones whose character is the best.

A Hadīth states that a person asked Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam*: "Which believer is the most superior as regards *īmān*?" Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* replied: "The one who has the best character."

(5) Enjoying the love and close proximity of Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* on the day of Resurrection will be for those believers whose character was the best. Their position as regards this love and proximity will surpass the position of others.

A Hadīth states: "The one who will be most beloved to me, and closest to me on the day of Resurrection shall be the one whose character is the best."

(6) The acquisition of good character is so important that it is essential for salvation from the Hell-fire and entry into Paradise. If there is any defect in this prerequisite, there is no other deed – even salāh and fasting – which could make up for it.

A Hadīth states that a Sahābī said to Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam*: "There is a certain woman who keeps fast by day and spends the night in optional salāh, but she is of bad character."

Rasūlullāh sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam said: “There is no good in her. She is among the inmates of Hell.”

(7) Rasūlullāh sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam used to make this *duʿā’* to Allāh *taʿālā*: “O Allāh! Beautify my character and steer me towards good character.” He made this *duʿā’* despite possessing the best character.

He used to make the following *duʿā’*:

اَللّٰهُمَّ كَمَا حَسَّنْتَ خَلْقِيْ فَحَسِّنْ خُلُقِيْ

O Allāh! Beautify my character just as You beautified my appearance.

اَللّٰهُمَّ اهْدِنِيْ لِأَحْسَنِ الْأَخْلَاقِ فَإِنَّهُ لَا يَهْدِيْ لِأَحْسَنِهَا إِلَّا أَنْتَ، وَاصْرِفْ عَنِّيْ سَيِّئَهَا فَإِنَّهُ لَا يَصْرِفُ عَنِّي سَيِّئَهَا إِلَّا أَنْتَ.

O Allāh! Guide me towards best character because none besides You can guide towards it. Ward off evil character from me because none except You can ward it off from me.

Obviously, Rasūlullāh sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam will only make *duʿā’* for something which is liked by Allāh *taʿālā* and would bring a person closer to Him.

(8) Allāh *taʿālā* praised Rasūlullāh sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam for his good character. Allāh *taʿālā* says:

اِنَّكَ لَعَلٰى خُلُقٍ عَظِيْمٍ

You are certainly on a sublime pedestal of character.

Allāh *taʿālā* will only praise him for something which is really great. This clearly shows the lofty rank of character in Islam.

(9) There are many verses in the Qur'ān on the subject of good character. They either instruct us to adopt good character or praise those who have good character. Together with praising them, Allāh *taʿālā* mentions the reward that is in store for them. The Qur'ān also instructs us to abstain from bad character, and speaks about the ignobility of those of bad character. Together with disparaging them, Allāh *taʿālā* mentions the punishment which is in store for them.

Undoubtedly, this large number of verses related to the theme of character clearly demonstrates its importance. Verses making reference to character were revealed in Makkah – before the emigration – and also in Madīnah, after the emigration. This increases the importance of good character even more. It shows that it is something which no Muslim can do without, and consideration of it is essential on every Muslim.

We now quote, with a few changes, the article of Hadrat Muslihul Ummat *rahimahullāh* with regard to hypocrisy. May Allāh *taʿālā* make it beneficial for the *ummah*.

HYPOCRISY

By virtue of his Allāh-bestowed insight and foresight, and his extreme pain and concern for the *ummah*, Hadrat Muslihul Ummat Maulānā Shāh Wasīyyullāh Sāhib *quddisa sirruhu* writes as follows on the deplorable condition and evil character of the *ummah*:

In essence, all sections of the community – the elite and the masses – are immersed in destructive ailments. The masses can be described as follows:

استرسال الناس في اتباع الشهوات استرسال البهائم

They seem to have been set free to obey their desires like caged up animals which have been set free.

In other words, when an animal which has been confined to its pen for a long time, and is then released into the open pastures, it falls headlong onto the grazing grass which is available to it with total abandonment. Similarly, these people have been set free from the confines of the Sharīʻah, and destroyed themselves by totally immersing themselves in desires and lusts. Let alone practising on the pure Sharīʻah, no good is seen in them. This ailment has spread among the elite as well. Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʻalayhi wa sallam* expressed his fear in this regard in the following Hadīth:

عن عمر رضي الله عنه قال قال رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم: أخوف ما أخاف على أمتي كل منافق عليم اللسان. قال المناوي، أي عالم للعلم، منطلق اللسان به، لكنه جاهل القلب والعمل، فاسد العقيدة، يغر الناس بشقشقة لسانه.

Hadrat ʿUmar radiyallāhu ʿanhu narrates that Rasūlullāh sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam said: "The thing which I fear the most for my ummah is an articulate hypocrite." Al-Munāwī said: This refers to a person who possesses knowledge and is very eloquent in speaking about that knowledge. But he is an ignoramus in his heart and in action, hold corrupt beliefs, and deceives people with his sweet talking.

قال المحشي الآخر تحت قول كل منافق عليم اللسان، أي منطلق اللسان في العلوم والفصاحة، خال القلب من العمل به، إنما خاف صلى الله عليه وسلم على أمته منه لأنه العلم يقتدي به الناس فيضلهم.

Another commentator explains the words "an articulate hypocrite" as follows: He is very smooth talking in the different sciences and in eloquence, but his heart is devoid of practising on it. Rasūlullāh s̲allallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam feared for his ummah from such a person because he is an expert in the sciences; people would follow him and he would lead them astray.

The author of *Fayd̲ al-Qadīr Sharh̲ Jāmiʿ as̲-S̲aghīr* explains the reason for H̲ad̲rat ʿUmar *rad̲iyallāhu ʿanhu* relating this H̲adīth:

وسبب تحديث عمر رضي الله عنه بذلك أن الأحنف سيد أهل البصرة كان فاضلا فصيحا مفوها فقدم على عمر رضي الله عنه فحبسه عنده سنة يأتيه كل يوم وليلة فلا يأتيه عنه إلا ما يحب، ثم دعاه فقال: تدري لم حبستك عني؟ قال: لا. قال: إن رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم حدثنا فذكره ثم قال: خشيت أن تكون منهم، فالحمد لله يا أحنف. وفي رواية لابن عساكر انه قدم عليه فخطبه فأعجبه منطقه فحبسه سنة يختبره،

ثم قال: كنت أخشى أن تكون منافقا عليم اللسان، وإن رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم حذرنا منه، وأرجو أن تكون مؤمنا، فانحدر إلى مصرك.[1]

The reason why Hadrat ʿUmar radiyallāhu ʿanhu related this Hadīth is that Ahnaf, the leader of the people of Basra, who was an erudite scholar and an eloquent orator, came to ʿUmar radiyallāhu ʿanhu. So the latter held him back and asked him to remain with him for one year. Hadrat ʿUmar radiyallāhu ʿanhu would go to him every day and night [in order to find out about him] but he never did anything which ʿUmar radiyallāhu ʿanhu disapproved of. When Hadrat ʿUmar radiyallāhu ʿanhu was satisfied with him, he called for him and asked him: "Do you know why I kept you back with me for so long?" He replied: "No." Hadrat ʿUmar radiyallāhu ʿanhu said: "Because Rasūlullāh sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam said to us…" He then related the above Hadīth, and said: "I feared that you might be one of them. But all thanks are due to Allāh taʿālā you are not of them."

Another narration of Ibn ʿAsākir states: Ahnaf came to Hadrat ʿUmar radiyallāhu ʿanhu and spoke to him. Hadrat ʿUmar radiyallāhu ʿanhu was very impressed by his manner of speaking, so he held him back for one year. He then said to him: "I feared that you might be an articulate hypocrite regarding whom Rasūlullāh sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam had warned us. But now I hope that you are a true believer. You may go back to your city."

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[1] فيض القدير شرح جامع الصغير، ج١، ص ٢٢١.

We learn from the above Hadīth that Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* fears for the *ummah* from such a person who is a sweet talker, but has an illness such as hypocrisy in his heart. After pondering over this Hadīth and applying it to our times, we can say that there are many among us who embody such a person. It is therefore most sorrowful on our part for having made ourselves such that Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* fears us. To Allāh we belong and to Him is our return.

Note:

I am re-quoting the text of the Hadīth under discussion so that the meaning of its words are clearly understood.

عن عمر رضي الله عنه قال قال رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم: أخوف ما أخاف على أمتي كل منافق عليم اللسان.

Hadrat ʿUmar radiyallāhu ʿanhu narrates that Rasūlullāh sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam said: "The thing which I fear the most for my ummah is an articulate hypocrite."

We learn from this Hadīth that our spiritual physician, Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam*, feared that person of the *ummah* who, although is very proficient and eloquent in his speech, has the despicable trait of hypocrisy in his heart. The *ʿulamā'* state that the reason for his fear was that no matter what such a person says, and no matter how eloquently and sweetly he conveys it, the ill effects of his internal hypocrisy will reach the hearts of his addressees, and this will result in the

hardness and darkness of their hearts. It could also mean that because of his hard-heartedness, he will present his deviated and astray beliefs and ideas in such a convincing and articulate manner that they will be influenced by them and choose deviation for their selves.

This is obviously a very terrifying matter, but unfortunately, there are many people who go to great lengths in practising sweet talking and eloquence, present incorrect ideas to people, and thereby cause them to choose the path of unbelief and atheism. In fact, the situation at present is such that the opinions and ideas of unreliable people are given precedence over the statements and sayings of erudite *ʿulamā'* and scholars. This too is most terrifying. If Rasūlullāh *s̲allallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* feared such a people, how much more should we fear them!? Furthermore, we ought to be concerned about our own rectification so that we do not get caught up in the same web.

As for H̲ad̲rat ʿUmar *rad̲iyallāhu ʿanhu* keeping H̲ad̲rat Ah̲naf with him for a full year, making arrangements for his boarding, monitoring him on a daily basis, and only permitting him to return to his city after being satisfied with his condition – all this was done because he was very concerned about rectification of the *nafs* to the extent that he considered the presence of hypocrisy in the heart of an eloquent and articulate person to be extremely dangerous and destructive. He did not suffice with merely holding him back, but monitored him closely. This shows the extra importance he attached to rectification of the self.

This is why the *mashā'ikh* consider remaining in the *khānqāhs* to be necessary. By remaining there, a person can engage in the remembrance of Allāh *taʿālā* with concentration and focus, and be able to rectify his self in this way. Moreover, his speeches and lectures to other people will prove to be effective. This is established from the following words of Allāh *taʿālā*:

فَإِذَا فَرَغْتَ فَانْصَبْ وِإِلَى رَبِّكَ فَارْغَبْ

So when you have finished [your task], devote yourself [to Allāh's worship]. And to your Sustainer turn [all your] attention.[1]

After quoting the above Hadīth, Hadrat Muslihul Ummat *rahimahullāh* quotes another admonitory Hadīth wherein the evil consequences of customary recitation of the Qur'ān is warned against. Those who approve of such recitation are also reprimanded.

عن حذيفة رضي الله عنه مرفوعا: إقرأوا القرآن بلحون العرب وأصواتها، وإياكم ولحون أهل العشق ولحون أهل الكتابين، وسيجيء بعدي قوم يرجعون بالقراءة ترجيع الغناء والنوح لا يجاوز حناجرهم، مفتونة قلوبهم وقلوب الذين يعجبهم شأنهم.[٢]

Hudhayfah radiyallāhu ʿanhu narrates: Read the Qur'ān in the tone and manner of the Arabs. Beware of reading it in the tone and manner of lovers and the people of the Book (Jews and Christians). There will appear after me some people who will read the Qur'ān as though they were singers and mourners.

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[1] Sūrah al-Inshirāh, 94: 7-8.

[2] رواه البيهقي ورزين.

Their recitation will not go beyond their throats. Consequently, their hearts will be subject to tribulation, and also the hearts of those who approve of their condition.

Note:

Just imagine! The *īmān* of a person is polished and the ailment of his heart is cured by the recitation of the Qur'ān. But here, the complete opposite is happening because the reader has succumbed to customary and superficial recitation. It shows how necessary it is to abstain from recitation of this nature.

We should always endeavour to read the Qur'ān in a manner which would polish our hearts and be a means for proximity to Allāh *taʿālā*. In so doing, we will be manifestations of that similitude which was explained by Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* when he said that such people are like the citron [fruit] which has a beautiful fragrance, a delicious taste, and an appealing colour.

A word of warning from Hadrat Muslihul Ummat

Hadrat says: Based on my lengthy and continuous experience I am saying this as a religious obligation (and *inshā Allāh*, I will not be taken to task for it) that at present, everyone – the masses and the elite – are suffering from the ailment of hypocrisy. Their external self is different from their internal self. They are very sweet tongued, but their hearts are vile.

قلوبهم قلوب الأعاجم، وألسنتهم ألسنة العرب. وألسنتهم أحلى من السكر، وقلوبهم أمرّ من الذئاب.

They have hearts of non-Arabs but tongues of Arabs. Their tongues are sweeter than sugar, but their hearts are more bitter than wolves.

The things against which we were warned in the above Ahādīth are occurring at present. Shaykh Saʿdī *rahimahullāh* complains about this situation as follows:

> They are like meek lambs in your presence, but once they turn their backs, they are like voracious wolves.

I say: In today's times, people are criticized from the heart, but praised by the tongue.

The real reason why lectures and talks are not effective

The real reason why lectures and talks are not effective is that the *ʿulamā'* abandoned delivering them for the sake of Allāh *taʿālā*. Talks and lectures are now delivered for various worldly and material motives. The following is stated in *ad-Durr al-Mukhtār*:

التذكير على المنابر للوعظ والإتعاظ سنة الأنبياء والمرسلين، ولرياسة ومال وقبول عامة من ضلالة اليهود والنصارى.[1]

Reminding and advising from the pulpits for the sake of admonition and teaching lessons have been a

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[1] الدر المختار مع الشامي، ج٥، ص ٢٧٩.

practice of the Prophets and Messengers. As for delivering talks for the sake of leadership, wealth and general acceptance among the public; this has been the deviation of the Jews and Christians.

This is derived from the following verse:

يَأَيُّهَا الَّذِيْنَ اٰمَنُوْآ إِنَّ كَثِيْرًا مِّنَ الْأَحْبَارِ وَالرُّهْبَانِ لَيَأْكُلُوْنَ أَمْوَالَ النَّاسِ بِالْبَاطِلِ وَيَصُدُّوْنَ عَنْ سَبِيْلِ اللهِ.

O believers! Many of the scholars and dervishes of the people of the Book devour the wealth of the people wrongfully and they hinder [others] from the path of Allāh.[1]

At this point it will be most appropriate to note the following: The Qur'ān and Hadīth speak about the detestability of a certain type of hypocrisy. Hadrat Shāh Walī Allāh Sāhib Muhaddith Dehlawī *rahimahullāh*, in his book, *al-Fauz al-Kabīr fī Usūl at-Tafsīr*, considers one of the important objectives of the revelation of the Qur'ān to be the challenging of the four false creeds, viz. the Jews, Christians, polytheists and hypocrites. Despite this, the fourth discussion which is related to the hypocrites has been totally disregarded in today's times. Consequently, the Muslims are not only caught up in practical hypocrisy (*nifāq ʿamalī*) but also doctrinal and ideological hypocrisy (*nifāq iʿtiqādī*). This can be gauged from the conversations of many modern-minded Muslims who have become prey to doctrinal hypocrisy. We seek refuge in Allāh *taʿālā*.

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[1] Sūrah at-Taubah, 9: 34.

H͟ad͟rat Shāh Walī Allāh S͟āh͟ib Muh͟addith Dehlawī *rah͟imahullāh* writes in this regard in *al-Fauz al-Kabīr*:

> There is no difference between those who heard the teachings of Rasūlullāh *s͟allallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* directly from him (during his lifetime) and opted for hypocrisy, and those who were born after him and adopted ways against the injunctions of Allāh *taʿālā* despite learning of them with absolute conviction.[1]

Because people do not even know the repugnance and despicability of hypocrisy, they do not bother about abstaining from it and safeguarding themselves from it. It is necessary for them to know its repugnance so that they can keep their *īmān* and deeds pure from this filth, and embellish themselves with the joy of genuine *īmān*.

Types of hypocrisy

In order to learn the nature and types of hypocrisy, the following is quoted from *H͟ujjatullāh al-Bālighah*, the magnum opus of H͟ad͟rat Shāh Walī Allāh S͟āh͟ib Muh͟addith Dehlawī *rah͟imahullāh*.

ويسمى مقابل الإيمان الأول بالكفر، وأما مقابل الإيمان الثاني:

(١) فإن كان تفويتا للتصديق، وإنما يكون الانقياد بغلبة السيف فهو النفاق الأصلي، والمنافق بهذا المعنى لا فرق بينه وبين الكافر في الآخرة، بل المنافقون (في الدرك الأسفل من النار).

[1] *Al-Fauz al-Kabīr*, p. 9.

(٢) وإن كان مصدقا مفوتا لوظيفة الجوارح سمي فاسقا.

(٣) أو مفوتا لوظيفة الجنان فهو المنافق بنفاق آخر، وقد سماه بعض السلف نفاق العمل. وذلك (١) أن يغلب عليه حجاب الطبع أو الرسم أو سوء المعرفة فيكون ممعنا في محبة الدنيا والعشائر والأولاد، فيدب في قلبه استعباد المجازاة والإجتراء على المعاصي من حيث لا يدري، وإن كان معترفا بالنظر البرهاني بما ينبغي الإعتراف به. (٢) أو رأى الشدائد في الإسلام فكرهه. (٣) أو أحب الكفار بأعيانهم فصد ذلك من إعلاء كلمة الله.[1]

The opposite of the first type of īmān (to which worldly orders are applied) is known as kufr (unbelief). As for the second type of īmān (to which orders of the Hereafter are applied), then its opposite could refer to the following:

(1) It removes attestation of the heart, and submission and obedience can only be realized by the sword [i.e. by compulsion], then this is nifāq aṯlī (fundamental hypocrisy). And a hypocrite, in this meaning, is no different from an unbeliever in the Hereafter. In fact, the hypocrites shall be in the lowest pits of the Hell-fire.

(2) If a person attests with the heart but does not fulfil the physical obligations [of the Sharīʿah], he will be referred to as a fāsiq (flagrant sinner).

(3) If a person does not fulfil the obligations of the heart, he is a different type of hypocrite. Some past scholars refer to this type as nifāq ʿamalī (practical hypocrisy).

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[1] حجة الله البالغة، ج ١، ص ١٦٣.

Practical hypocrisy is manifested due to any of the following reasons:

A person is overcome by his temperament, customs or incorrect recognition of Allāh taʿālā. This causes him to become immersed in love for this world, family and children. Gradually, this causes his heart to consider the recompense [of good and evil deeds] to be far-fetched, and makes him audacious in committing sins in a manner he is not even aware of. This happens even if he may be a person who attests to all the necessities of Dīn through proofs and evidences.

He considers Islam to be a very difficult religion to practise, so he dislikes it.

He is attracted to notable and powerful unbelievers (kuffār), so this attraction to them prevents him from raising the word of Allāh taʿālā.

Hadrat Maulānā Muftī Saʿīd Ahmad Sāhib Pālanpūrī *mudda zilluhu* explains the above text in a concise form in his book, *Rahmatullāhi al-Wāsiʿah*. I am quoting it below. *Inshā Allāh*, this subject will be easier to understand.

Unbelief (*kufr*) is the opposite of the first type of *īmān*, i.e. external submission to which worldly injunctions are connected. As for the second type of *īmān*, i.e. absolute conviction to which injunctions of the Hereafter are connected, the opposite of it can be found in three forms; and each of them have separate names.

First form: There is no attestation of the heart whatsoever, and external submission is only

realized by fear of the sword. This is known as *nifāq aṣlī* (fundamental hypocrisy) and *nifāq iʿtiqādī* (doctrinal hypocrisy). With regard to the Hereafter, there is no difference between this hypocrite and an open unbeliever. In fact, this hypocrite is worse than an unbeliever. He will be in the lowest pit of Hell as clearly stated in verse 145 of Sūrah an-Nisā'.

Second form: There is attestation of *īmān* in the heart, but external physical actions are non-existent. In other words, he discards the compulsory duties of Islam and commits major sins. Such a person is known as a *fāsiq*.

Third form: There is attestation in the heart but the person does not fulfil its obligations. In other words, he is deprived of conviction in his *īmān*. This is another form of hypocrisy, and some past scholars refer to it as *nifāq ʿamalī* (practical hypocrisy).

Practical hypocrisy is manifested in three ways

(1) The veil of the self, world, or ignorance falls on the heart of the person. He becomes terribly immersed in the love for wealth, family and children. This causes him to consider reward and punishment [in the Hereafter] to be far-fetched, and he becomes audacious in committing sins. These things creep into his heart without even perceiving it. This happens even if he believes, by his intellect and proofs, in those things which are necessary for *īmān.*

(2) He sees difficulties in Islam. In other words, after embracing Islam, he has to suffer pains and

calamities. Alternatively, he could be a Muslim by descent, but when he experiences these things, he begins to dislike Islam.

(3) He has love for certain unbelievers, and this love for them prevents him from raising the word of Allāh *taʿālā*. This is why the Qur'ān strictly forbids love for unbelievers.[1]

A comprehensive definition of hypocrisy

Hadrat Shāh Walī Allāh Sāhib Muhaddith Dehlawī *rahimahullāh* provides a comprehensive definition of hypocrisy in his book, *Tafhīmāt Ilāhīyyah*. We take the opportunity of quoting it with its translation.

والكلمة الجامعة في النفاق أنه فنى في ملكة رذيلة أعني بذلك أن تكون الملكة راسخة في قلبه قلما صدر عنه قول أو فعل إلا وهي البطانة فيه والباعثة عليه، فقد تكون هذه الملكة بخلا وقد تكون شغلا بلذائذ الأطعمة ونفائس الألبسة والمنكح الشهي والمسكن الوضي وغيرها، وقد يكون حسدا وحقدا، وبالجملة فله شعب كثيرة وأشدها ما اجتمع فيه عدة من الرذائل فخلص منها هيئة وجدانية فنى فيها النفس.[٢]

A comprehensive definition of hypocrisy is that a person becomes annihilated in an evil attribute. What I mean by this is that the attributes become so firmly embedded in his heart that rarely does he say or do anything without it [the evil attribute] prompting him and instigating him. This evil attribute is either miserliness, preoccupation with exotic foods, elegant clothes, desirable women, palatial homes,

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[1] رحمة الله الواسعة، ج ٣، ص ٤٧.

[2] التفهيمات الإلهية، ص ٣٧.

and so on. It could also be jealousy and malice. In short, there are many branches of hypocrisy, and the worst of it is when several evils are collectively found in a person. This results in a state of ecstasy in which the self is annihilated.

The many branches of hypocrisy

The explanation of the different branches of hypocrisy as given in the Qur'ān and Hadīth is more than enough for a person of insight and one who is intent on rectifying his self. For example, causing corruption in the land, severing ties with those whom one was supposed to maintain contact, giving vent to one's greed and miserliness, following one's base desires, each person giving preference to his own opinion over the opinions of others, lowering one's self to vulgar language when disputing with someone, breaking a promise, speaking lies, causing harm to Muslims, whispering to each other in the presence of others, becoming vulgar and obscene when engaging in an argument, etc.

Among the different branches of hypocrisy, there is one which occurs quite often, viz. the temperament is attached to things which are perceptible. In the presence of this, the self (*nafs*) cannot accept the existence of anything similar from the imperceptible or divine. Consequently, such a person becomes inclined towards *tashbīh* (whereby he wants to fathom the divine through the physical and perceptible), and he now fabricates gods apart from Allāh *taʿālā*. Or, for example, he is not inclined to any issue related to the Hereafter because it too is imperceptible, even though he may customarily

admit to it. This can be understood from the story related in the Qur'ān: There were two brothers, one of who said: "I do not think my orchard will ever be destroyed, and I do not think that the Resurrection will ever take place. And even if I am taken to my Lord, I will certainly receive an orchard which is much better than this one."

Although this does not mean an absolute rejection [of the Hereafter], because the perceptible is totally embedded in him, he considers matters related to the Hereafter to be far-fetched, and this resulted in his rejection of it even though he may customarily attest to it. In short, the s̲alāh, supplications, charities, *dhikr*, etc. of such a person are carried out like everything else without any desire and enthusiasm to do them. Alternatively, he does them because they result in a person being considered with high regard in the community. The first (i.e. performing s̲alāh, keeping fast, etc. out of a habit and custom) is worse than the second.

An objection and a reply to it

The author of *Rūh̲ al-Maʿānī* explains the verse as follows:

بِمَآ أَخْلَفُوا اللهَ مَا وَعَدُوْهُ وَبِمَا كَانُوْا يَكْذِبُوْنَ

Because they broke the promise which they made to Allāh and because they used to tell lies.[1]

Read the explanation carefully.

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[1] Sūrah at-Taubah, 9: 77.

آية المنافق ثلاث، إذا حدث كذب، وإذا وعد أخلف، وإذا اؤتمن خان. ويستفاد عن الصحاح آية أخرى له، إذا خاصم فجر. واستشكل ذلك بيان هذه الخصال قد توجد في المسلم الذي لا شك فيه ولا شبهة تعتريه، بل كثير من علمائنا اليوم المتصفون بأكثرها أو بها كلها، وأجيب بأن المعنى أن هذه الخصال خصال نفاق، وصاحبها يشبه المنافقون في التخلق بها، والمراد بقوله عليه والصلوة والسلام على ما في بعض الروايات الصحيحة أربع من كن فيه كان منافقا خالصا، انه كان شديد الشبه بالمنافقين، لا أنه كان منافقا حقيقة.[١]

There are three signs of a hypocrite: When he speaks, he lies. When he promises, he goes against his promise. When he is entrusted, he breaks his trust. One other sign is mentioned in the authentic A<u>h</u>ādīth, viz. when he disputes, he becomes vulgar and obscene.

There is an objection to these signs in the sense that they are also found in a Muslim regarding whose Islam there is no doubt. In fact, let alone ordinary Muslims, many 'ulamā' of our times have most of these qualities if not all of them.

The reply to it is that these are qualities of hypocrisy, and the person who has them will be likened to the hypocrites in his adoption of these qualities. Similarly, it is mentioned in some narrations that there are four qualities which, if found in a person, he will be an absolute hypocrite. Even in this narration it would mean that he is very similar to the hypocrites; not that he is really a hypocrite in the true sense of the word.

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[1] روح المعاني، ج ٦، ص ١٤٥.

On reading the discussion about traits of hypocrites being found in Muslims and a reply to it in *Rūh̲ al-Maʿānī*, a lingering doubt in my mind was removed. The doubt was that these qualities which are referred to as the signs of hypocrisy are found in most Muslims – masses and elite alike. So the existence of these signs in them demands that they be considered to be absolute hypocrites. But the presence of *īmān* in them prevents us from applying this rule to them. To put it differently, among whom would Allāh *taʿālā* include these people? If we say they are hypocrites, how can it be when they possess *īmān*? And if we say they are Muslims, how can it be when they have traits and qualities of hypocrites?

But when I read the above explanation in *Rūh̲ al-Maʿānī*, I was overjoyed because a lingering puzzle was solved, and I learnt the ruling of the Sharīʿah with regard to such people. That is, although they are Muslims, they are very much likened to the hypocrites. This removed by doubt and confusion, and I was put at rest. All praise is due to Allāh *taʿālā*, the Rabb of the worlds.

In short, this discussion is a difficult one, the *ʿulamāʾ* went into detail in explaining it, but unfortunately, our heedlessness has shut our eyes to these discussions. I do not think there is any type of hypocrisy which is not found in us. We accept, we are not doctrinal hypocrites, but it is sad to note that attributes of the hypocrites are in us. Is the displeasure of Allāh *taʿālā* with regard to these attributes as mentioned in the Qur'ān and H̲adīth not sufficient to regard them as despicable? If these

traits are still found in us, then it is indeed unfortunate and astonishing.

The *tafsīr* of Baydāwī *rahimahullāh* quotes a statement of Hadrat Salmān Fārsī *radiyallāhu ʿanhu* with regard to the hypocrites. He says that all those who are embodiments of the following verse have not appeared as yet. He probably meant that it not only refers to the hypocrites of the time of Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam*, but also those who will come later, and will be in the same condition. The following verse will apply to them as well:

وَإِذَا قِيْلَ لَهُمْ لَا تُفْسِدُوْا فِي الْأَرْضِ

When it is said to them: Do not cause mischief in the land…

Hadrat Hudhayfah *radiyallāhu ʿanhu* said:

ما أمنه إلا منافق، وما خافه إلا مؤمن

None is safe from him except a hypocrite. And none but a believer fears him.

Unfortunately, we become anxious at hearing the word hypocrisy, whereas it has permeated our veins and blood. If a person considers an illness to be actually good health, how can it ever be hoped of him to rectify himself?!

It is the duty of the *ʿulamā'* to fully comprehend any evil condition which has overpowered the people, explain its harms and evils, and to warn them against it. They must reject it outright without fearing the criticism of anyone in the least. One can then hope that people will become conscious of the

evil. Once this happens, it will be easy to give it up. Inspiration is from Allāh *taʿālā* alone.

Hadrat Muslihul Ummat *rahimahullāh* then enumerates the types of hypocrisy and quotes the statements of senior scholars in support of it. These are most insightful and worth looking at.

Two types of hypocrisy

The first type of hypocrisy is doctrinal hypocrisy (*nifāq iʿtiqādī*). It is worse than unbelief (*kufr*) and it can never combine with *īmān*.

The second type is practical hypocrisy (*nifāq ʿamalī*). Although it can combine with *īmān*, it is very dangerous and destructive because it is against sincerity and devotion. There are many misunderstandings in this regard because people generally confine hypocrisy to the first type, and do not know about the second. So although they are committing the second type, they consider themselves to be sincere and devoted. If there is no perception of an illness and it is instead considered to be good health, there will be no concern to treat it. Thus, although this illness was treatable, lack of consciousness with regard to it has rendered it untreatable.

> O what a loss! The goods of the caravan of traders has been destroyed. And the perception of this loss has disappeared from the hearts of these traders.

Look at the factual reply given by Hippocrates when he was asked about a destructive disease:

Someone went to Hippocrates and asked: "Which diseases do you consider to be destructive?"

He replied: "There is no woeful condition worse than an illness for which Allāh created no cure."

But the illness which is disregarded as a minor illness, while the doctor considers it to be useless talk.

This is the general situation today. We do not consider an illness to be an illness, so how will we ever bother about treating it!?

The meaning of hypocrisy

Hypocrisy: What I refer to as the currency in vogue is actually an illness of the heart, and is directly opposite of sincerity and devotion. This could be divided into two categories: (1) It is found in one's beliefs. (2) Its effect is confined to actions; beliefs are safe from it. The second category can be combined with *īmān*, and it can have different levels of increase and decrease.

Imām Ahmad ibn Hambal *rahimahullāh* quotes a Hadīth from which we learn that some hearts have *īmān* accompanied with hypocrisy.

عن أبي سعيد رضي الله عنه قال قال رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم: القلوب أربعة، قلب أجرد فيه مثل السراج يزهر، وقلب أغلف مربوط على غلافه، وقلب منكوس، وقلب مصفح. فأما القلب الأجرد فقلب المؤمن سراجه فيه نوره. وأما القلب الأغلف فقلب الكافر. وأما المنكوس فقلب المنافق عرف ثم أنكر. وأما القلب المصفح فقلب فيه

إيمان ونفاق. فمثل الإيمان فيه كمثل البقلة يمدها الماء الطيب ومثل النفاق فيه كمثل القرحة يمدها القيح والدم. فأي المدتين غلبت على الأخرى غلبت عليه.[1]

Abū Saʿīd ra<u>d</u>iyallāhu ʿanhu narrates that Rasūlullāh <u>s</u>allallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam said: The hearts of man can be divided into four categories: (1) a heart which is (ajrad) completely barren, in which something like a light is shining, (2) a heart which is (aghlaf) covered by a type of covering, (3) a heart which is mankūs, and (4) a heart which is mu<u>s</u>affa<u>h</u>. (Rasūlullāh <u>s</u>allallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam himself explains each one): (1) An ajrad heart is the heart of a believer, and the light in it is the light of īmān. (2) An aghlaf heart is the heart of an unbeliever. (3) A mankūs heart is the heart of a hypocrite. It recognized the truth, but then rejected it. (4) A mu<u>s</u>affa<u>h</u> heart has both īmān and hypocrisy in it. The īmān in it is like greenery which grows lush with wholesome water. And the hypocrisy in it is like a boil which grows with blood and pus. Whichever of the two overpowers the other, that is the condition which will overpower the person's heart.

Look! This <u>H</u>adīth clearly states that you also get a heart in which *īmān* and hypocrisy are both found. We also learn that there is a constant conflict between the two. This is why we see a person speaking about *īmān* and doing good deeds in accordance with that *īmān*. But the same man would act completely opposite at other times. This is nothing but a result of the mutual war between the two. Whichever of the two overpowers the other,

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[1] مسند أحمد، ج ٣، ص ١٧.

the person will act accordingly. At present, the hearts of the majority of Muslims are like this fourth category. Unfortunately, there is no one to tell them about these things, and no one is prepared to listen.

1. Affirmation of both types of hypocrisy from the explanation of ʿAllāmah Kurmānī

This is the gist of the explanation given by ʿAllāmah Ibn Hajar *rahimahullāh* in *Fath al-Bārī, Sharh Bukhārī*, which he quoted from ʿAllāmah Kurmānī *rahimahullāh.*

النفاق لغة مخالفة الباطن للظاهر، فإن كان في اعتقاد الإيمان فهو نفاق الكفر، وإلا فهو نفاق العمل، ويدخل فيه الفعل والترك، وتتفاوت مراتبه.[1]

The literal meaning of hypocrisy is: the internal self being different from the external self. If this difference is with regard to beliefs and īmān, it is known as nifāq kufr (hypocrisy of unbelief). If not, it is hypocrisy in actions. This includes orders and prohibitions, and it has different levels.

2. Affirmation of this division from the statement of Khattābī

قال الخطابي: النفاق ضربان، أحدهما أن يظهر صاحبه الدين وهو مبطن الكفر، وعليه كانوا في عهد رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم. والآخر ترك المحافظة على أمور الدين سرا، ومراعاتها علانيا. وهذه أيضا يسمى نفاقا كما جاء: سباب المؤمن فسوق وقتاله كفر. وإنما كفر دون كفر، وفسق دون فسق، ونفاق دون نفاق.[2]

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[1] فتح الباري، ج ١، ص ٨٩.

[2] فتح الملهم، ج ١، ص ١٣٤.

Al-Khaṯṯābī said: There are two types of hypocrisy. One is when a person expresses himself as a believer while he is concealing unbelief in his heart. This is the type of hypocrites who were prevalent in the time of Rasūlullāh s̱allallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam. The other type of hypocrisy is when a person abstains from upholding the commands of Dīn when he is in privacy, but adheres to them in public. This is also known as hypocrisy, as stated in a H̱adīth: "It is a flagrant sin to be verbally abusive towards a believer, and an act of unbelief to murder him." One type of unbelief is lower than the other, one type of flagrant sinning (fisq) is lower than the other, and one type of hypocrisy is lower than the other.

2. A rational affirmation of the second type of hypocrisy from a text of *Ihyā' al-ʿUlūm*

Do hypocrites exist today as well? Some people feel that the hypocrites against whom the Qur'ān speaks refers to a group of people who were confined to the era of Rasūlullāh *s̱allallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam*. There were no hypocrites before them, nor after them. Such an opinion is not only incorrect, but most astonishing.

Allāh *taʿālā* speaks about a particular type of pious people at the very beginning of the Qur'ān. This is followed by mentioning the unbelievers, and then the hypocrites. Even our intellect will deduce that since the Qur'ān is a divine law of Allāh *taʿālā* until the day of Resurrection, we will have to accept that there will certainly be all three types of people in every era. This is because there are always two types of people with regard to a particular thing: those who accept it, and those who reject. Those

who accept are subdivided into two categories: (1) those who accept it with their hearts and tongues, (2) those who accept verbally, but reject with their hearts. Those who reject outright are unbelievers, those who accept with their hearts and tongues are believers, and those who accept externally only are hypocrites. It cannot happen that a person accepts verbally, and rejects with his heart. This does not normally happen.

We now quote a text about hypocrisy and hypocrites from *Ih̲yā' al-ʿUlūm*:

قال صلى الله عليه وسلم: أكثر منافقي هذه الأمة قراءها. قال حذيفة: المنافقون اليوم أكثر منهم على عهد رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم، فكانوا إذ ذاك يخفونه وهم اليوم يظهرونه. وهذا النفاق يضاد صدق الإيمان وكماله، وهو خفي، فقد قيل اللحسن البصري: يقولون أن لا نفاق اليوم، فقال: يا أخي، لو هلك المنافقون لاستوحشتم في الطريق، وقال هو أو غيره: لو نبتت للمنافقين أذنابا ما قدرنا أن نطأ على الأرض بأقدامنا.[١]

Rasūlullāh s̲allallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam said: "The majority of hypocrites of this ummah will be the qurrā' (readers of the Qur'ān and ʿulamā' – may Allāh taʿālā protect us)." H̲ad̲rat H̲udhayfah rad̲iyallāhu ʿanhu said: "Nowadays, the hypocrites are much more than what they numbered during the era of Rasūlullāh s̲allallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam. The difference between the two is that they used to conceal their hypocrisy, while today, people expose it (due to their audaciousness)." This type of hypocrisy

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[1] ملخصا من إحياء العلوم، ج ١، ص ١٣٤.

is the opposite of genuine and perfect īmān, and it is a subtle thing. Someone said to Hadrat Hasan Basrī rahimahullāh: "People are saying that there is no hypocrisy nowadays." He replied: "Brother! If all the hypocrites were to be destroyed [now], you will find the roads and pathways to be scary [because almost everyone will be destroyed, the houses and businesses will be deserted, and you will feel lonely and scared]." He [Hadrat Hasan Basrī rahimahullāh] or someone else said: "Assuming a tail were to grow from the bodies of the hypocrites, it would be difficult for us to walk about [because these people will be so many that their tails would take all the place on the ground, making it difficult for a person to find an empty spot on the ground]."

4. Practical hypocrisy which even the Sahābah *radiyallāhu ʿanhum* used to fear

Hadrat Shāh Walī Allāh Sāhib Muhaddith Dehlawī *rahimahullāh* writes in *al-Khayr al-Kathīr* that another form of hypocrisy is when a person believes in Allāh *taʿālā* and Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* with his heart and tongue, but because he commits sins with his tongue, heart, private parts, etc., his sins have encompassed him completely. A person who finds himself in such a situation has actually annihilated himself in his sins. In other words, the committing of sins has become part of his temperament and is second nature to him. This type of hypocrisy can be found with *īmān*, and this is the type which the Sahābah *radiyallāhu ʿanhum* used to fear. Shāh Walī Allāh Sāhib *rahimahullāh* writes:

المنافق في عرف الشرع يطلق على معنيين، الأول هو المصدق بقلبه ولسانه بالله ورسوله، وقد أحاطت به خطئيات من قبل اللسان والفرج والقلب وغيرها، وكل من أحاطت به خطيئته، أي فنى فيها نوع فناء، فهو المنافق بالمعنى الأول، وإياه كانت الصحابة يخافون.[1]

A hypocrite, in the definition of the Sharīʿah, is defined in two ways. One is, he affirms Allāh taʿālā and Rasūlullāh s̲allallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam with his heart and tongue, but is totally encompassed by sins committed by his heart, tongue, private parts, etc.

Any person who has been encompassed by his sins in such a manner is, in a way, annihilated in his sins. So he is a hypocrite according to the first definition, and this is the type of hypocrisy which the S̲ah̲ābah rad̲iyallāhu ʿanhum used to fear.

The *Ih̲yā' al-ʿUlūm* also states that Ibn Abī Malīkah *rah̲imahullāh* said: "I met 130 Companions of Rasūlullāh *s̲allallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* – and according to another narration – 150 Companions – each of whom used to fear hypocrisy a lot." He also said: "H̲ad̲rat ʿUmar *rad̲iyallāhu ʿanhu* would constantly ask H̲ad̲rat H̲udhayfah *rad̲iyallāhu ʿanhu* (the confidant of Rasūlullāh *s̲allallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam*): "O H̲udhayfah! Did Rasūlullāh *s̲allallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* include me in the list of the hypocrites?"

A Muslim who has this type of practical hypocrisy will be deprived of the rank of the *s̲iddīqīn* (the truthful) and will have to suffer the punishment of

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[1] الخير الكثير، ص ١٣٦.

Hell for a certain period of time. Obviously, except those on whom Allāh *taʿālā* shows His mercy.

5. Hypocrisy adds to the repugnance of unbelief

I now quote a statement of ʿAllāmah Shaʿrānī *rahimahullāh* (which actually prompted me to delve into this entire discussion) which he makes in a very unique and impressionable manner in his book, *al-Mīzān.*

وقد ذم الله سبحانه وتعالى منافقي الكفار بنفاقهم زيادة على حصول ذمهم بصفة كفرهم في نحو قوله تعالى: يا أيها الرسول لا يحزنك الذين يسارعون في الكفر من الذين قالوا آمنا بأفواههم ولم تؤمن قلوبهم...الخ.[1]

Allāh taʿālā speaks out against the unbelievers who were also hypocrites (i.e. the qualities of unbelief and hypocrisy were found in them) more than what He does for their qualities of unbelief. For example, Allāh taʿālā says: "O Messenger! Do not grieve over those who fall headlong into unbelief – those who say: 'We are believers' with their mouths while their hearts have not believed.'"[2]

Look! Allāh *taʿālā* first says "those who fall headlong into unbelief". This shows that they already have the element of unbelief. But He did not stop there. Instead, He said: "those who say: 'We are believers' with their mouths while their hearts have not believed." In this way, Allāh *taʿālā* criticizes them even more. In other words, not only are they unbelievers, but also hypocrites.

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[1] الميزان للشعراني.

[2] Sūrah al-Mā'idah, 5: 41.

It is obviously clear that a quality which Allāh *taʿālā* considered to be reproachable against the unbelievers will have to be even more abstained from by the Muslims. In fact, they must not have any quality which even resembles any of their qualities, and they have to remain distant from them. If a quality which is so reprehensible that it causes additional reprehension to a person who is already evil, we can well imagine how repugnant it will be for a good person to have such a quality.

If this one point is understood by Muslims today, it will be sufficient to spur their religious sentiment and natural nobility, to cause an abhorrence for hypocrisy in their hearts, and to uproot it completely from their systems. The point is: If hypocrisy is detestable for unbelievers, it will be far worse for Muslims to have it.

In short, since this illness is certainly found in us, it is necessary for us to pay special attention to removing it. Let alone in *Dīn*, there is no place whatsoever for this trait in our worldly life. Rulers will tolerate the existence of opponents to their rule and be vigilant against them. But they will never tolerate anyone who is outwardly their supporter while he harbours opposition to them from within. If the creation does not approve of this trait [of hypocrisy], do you think Allāh *taʿālā* will approve of it, and do you think He will be pleased with those who have it? Can any nation ever succeed if it has large numbers of such people? Presently we have each of those traits which Allāh *taʿālā* and Rasūlullāh *s̲allallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* disapproved of. Yet we want to enjoy the same

favours which genuine and true Muslims used to receive! How can this be possible?

> This is nothing but vain desires, an impossibility, and lunacy.

6. The sign of sincerity and hypocrisy

A hypocrite does not fear his hypocrisy. Imām Ghazzālī *rahimahullāh* states that the person who is furthest away from hypocrisy is the one who fears he has hypocrisy. And the one who is closest to hypocrisy is the one who feels he is free of it.

وقال رجل لحذيفة رضي الله عنه: أخاف الله أن أكون منافقا. فقال: لو كنت منافقا ما خفت النفاق. إن المنافق قد أمن من نفاق. ما خافه إلا مؤمن، وما آمنه إلا منافق.

A person said to Hadrat Hudhayfah radiyallāhu ʿanhu: "I fear Allāh taʿālā over the fact that I might be a hypocrite." He replied: "If you were really a hypocrite, you would not have feared hypocrisy. A real hypocrite is the one who feels secure from hypocrisy. None but a believer fears it, and none but a hypocrite feels secure from it.

7. The harm of hypocrisy

The explanation to the verse, "In their hearts is an illness, so Allāh increased their illness", as given by the author of *Rūh al-Maʿānī* is sufficient to serve as a lesson for us. He writes:

المرض على ما ذهب إليه أهل اللغة حالة خارجة عن الطبع، ضارة بالفعل، وقد يطلق المرض لغة على أثره، وهو الألم، وعلى الظلمة، وعلى ضعف القلوب وفتوره، كما قال غير واحد. ويطلق مجازا على ما يعرض المرء مما يخل بكمال نفسه كالبغضاء، والغفلة، وسوء العقيدة، والحسد، وغير ذلك من موانع الكمالات المشابهة لاختلال البدن المانع

عن الملاذ المؤدية إلى الهلاك والروحاني الذي هو أعظم من الهلاك الجسماني، والمنقول عن ابن مسعود رضي الله عنه وابن عباس رضي الله ومجاهد رحمه الله وقتادة رحمه الله وسائر السلف الصالح حمل المرض في الآية على المعنى المجازي ولا شك أن قلوب المنافقين كان ملأى من تلك الخبائث التي منعتهم مما منعتهم وأوصلتهم إلى الدرك الأسفل من النار.[١]

According to linguists, an illness is something which is out of a person's normal temperament, but causes harm and suffering to him. At times, it also refers to the effect which it causes, viz. pain. It also refers to darkness, weakness of the heart, and sluggishness of the heart – as mentioned by several scholars. There is a figurative meaning to it as well, viz. certain emotions which a person experiences occasionally, causing an obstacle in his spiritual perfection. These include hatred, heedlessness, evil beliefs, jealousy, and other obstacles to perfection which are similar to physical obstacles to the body. They prevent a person from spiritual delights, convey him to spiritual destruction which is worse than physical damage. H̲ad̲rat Ibn Masʿūd rad̲iyallāhu ʿanhu, Ibn ʿAbbās rad̲iyallāhu ʿanhu, Mujāhid rah̲imahullāh, Qatādah rah̲imahullāh and all righteous scholars of the past are of the opinion that the "illness" referred to in the above-quoted verse refers to the figurative meaning. The hearts of the hypocrites were undoubtedly filled with those [spiritual] germs which prevented them from acquiring what they were prevented from [i.e. the

[1] روح المعاني، ج ١، ص ١٤٨.

bounty of Islam], and conveyed them to the lowest pit of the Hell-fire.

8. The consequence of hypocrisy

Imām Ghazzālī *rahimahullāh* explains the consequences of the two types of hypocrisy, and the destiny of those who possess this trait. He says:

النفاق نفاقان، أحدهما يخرج من الدين ويلحق بالكافرين ويسلك في زمرة المخلدين في النار، والثاني يفضي بصاحبه إلى النار مدة أو ينقص درجات عليين ويحط من رتبة الصديقين.[1]

There are two types of hypocrisy. One expels a person completely from Dīn, attaches him to the unbelievers, and includes him among those who shall abide in the Hell-fire forever. The second type conveys the person to the Hell-fire for a certain period of time, or causes him to fall from the higher stages of the ʿillīyyīn (the stages in Paradise which are close to Allāh taʿālā), and deprives him of the rank of the truthful.

9. Take admonition from the condition of the hypocrites

Did you see the different factors which the scholars consider to be illnesses of the hypocrites? It was the very same heedlessness, hatred, enmity, malice, jealousy, (Allāh forbid) evil beliefs with regard to Allāh *taʿālā* and Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam*, etc. which became firmly entrenched in their hearts. These traits caused them to have

[1] إحياء العلوم، ج ١، ص ١٣٥.

doubts and misgivings which increased by the day. All these traits collectively came to be known as hypocrisy. It was never the intention of the Qur'ān to merely make mention of the conditions and attributes of past peoples. Rather, people of each era must reflect over these verses [related to hypocrisy], see whether they apply to their selves, and respond accordingly.

The hypocrites of those times certainly possessed these traits which were on the level of beliefs. But can we deny that the majority of us today, if not doctrinally, do not possess the practical traits of hypocrisy; traits such as heedlessness, hatred, jealousy, evil beliefs, etc.? If this is correct, why should Allāh *taʿālā* not be displeased with us? If we have these traits, how can we be eligible for His kindness and affection?

The fact of the matter is that these are traits of the unbelievers, and if a believer adopts the traits of the unbelievers, he cannot be a perfect believer. Rather, he will be deprived of the perfect qualities of believers. Yes, if we rectify our evil ways and embellish ourselves with the quality of sincerity, success and honour will kiss our feet.

10. The treatment for hypocrisy

You have learnt the nature of hypocrisy, and the severe reprimand and rebuke which Islam issues against hypocrites. Place this one side before you, and then place your actions and deeds before you. Now you decide for yourself and see whether this illness is found in you or not, and whether there is a need to treat it or not. If you answer in the

affirmative to both questions, you will have to learn the method of removing this destructive illness from your heart, because only if you remove it, will it be replaced by sincerity. In this way, our intentions will be rectified, and, as per the teaching of Rasūlullāh s̲allallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam: "Actions are judged by intentions", all our other *Dīnī* and worldly tasks will be rectified. After this, the Muslims will enjoy success in both worlds – *inshā Allāh*. This, according to me, is the way forward. But if this germ is allowed to grow within us, and we only concern ourselves with external bandaging and are satisfied with external rectification only, it will neither be beneficial, nor rational.

A simple way to acquire sincerity

Sincerity has to be acquired from those who possess it. A person must establish a bond with them, remain in their company, and to constantly bear in mind their statements and life situations. If a person does all this, it is impossible for him not to receive a portion of sincerity. The companionship of the *Ahlullāh* (close and pious servants of Allāh *taʿālā*) is most efficacious, and it certainly has an effect. Shaykh Saʿdī *rah̲imahullāh* explains this effect through an example in a very appealing way. He says:

> Once when I was in the public bath, I received a lump of fragrant soil from the hand of one of my beloveds.
>
> I addressed it saying: "Are you musk or amber? I am asking you this because I

have become intoxicated by your attractive fragrance."

It replied: "I was an ordinary insignificant lump of soil. But I remained in the company of flowers for a few days. The beauty of my companions brought this beauty into me, and I also became fragrant. Apart from this, I am the same lump of soil which I was from the beginning."

Note:

Glory to Allāh *taʿālā*! Look at the details in which Hadrat Muslihul Ummat *rahimahullāh* went in explaining the abhorrence of hypocrisy. The subject of hypocrisy was really his forte. He used to say: "Sincerity is not possible without separation from hypocrisy."

Based on this, Hadrat Muslihul Ummat *rahimahullāh* taught us the commentary of the verses related to hypocrisy so that we may come out of this sickness imbibe ourselves with the good health of sincerity, and be honoured with the pleasure and happiness of Allāh *taʿālā*.

The *duʿā'* of Hadrat Muslihul Ummat

I conclude this subject with the following *duʿā'*. May Allāh *taʿālā* accept it and make it of use. Āmīn.

اَللّٰهُمَّ طَهِّرْ قَلْبِيْ مِنَ النِّفَاقِ، وَعَمَلِيْ مِنَ الرِّيَاءِ، وَلِسَانِيْ مِنَ الْكَذِبِ، وَعَيْنِيْ مِنَ الْخِيَانَةِ، فَإِنَّكَ تَعْلَمُ خَائِنَةَ الْأَعْيُنِ وَمَا تُخْفِي الصُّدُوْرُ.

O Allāh! Purify my heart of hypocrisy, my actions of ostentation, my tongue from lies, and my eyes from

treachery. Surely You know the treachery of the eyes and what the chests conceal.

وَآخِرُ دَعْوَانَا أَنِ الْحَمْدُ للهِ رَبِّ الْعَالَمِيْنَ، وَالصَّلٰوةُ وَالسَّلَامُ عَلٰى رَسُوْلِهِ مُحَمَّدٍ وَآلِهِ وَأَصْحَابِهِ أَجْمَعِيْنَ.

26 Dhū al-Hijjah 1370 A.H.
Fatahpūr Tālnarjā, district Aʿzamgarh

Statements of Hadrat Muslihul Ummat on the subject of hypocrisy

We now quote a few statements of Hadrat Muslihul Ummat *rahimahullāh* on the subject of hypocrisy. These are selected from *Wasīyyatul Ihsān*.

1. The hypocrisy whose abhorrence is mentioned in the Qur'ān and Hadīth has nowadays become a meritorious art which is worthy of acquiring, which is formally taught, and perfection in it is considered to be a human excellence. The sharpest and smartest person is the one who is an expert in the art of hypocrisy. Who, like a mimicker, is very experienced in conveying the fake as if it is the original.

Hypocrisy is so repugnant that the Qur'ān considers it to be worse than *kufr* (unbelief). But let alone considering it to be a flaw, it is admired with appreciation. It has become a currency in vogue and enjoys widespread acceptance to the extent that it has left the riff raff and scum of society, entered the homes, and become common among friends. In fact, it has reached the pits where father with his son, student with his teacher, wife with her husband, and even a *murīd* with his shaykh will

resort to hypocrisy without any hesitation. A hypocrite is convincing us by his writings, his speeches, his ways and mannerisms – in short, in every way possible – that his internal self is exactly like his external self. He is trying his utmost to conceal his internal self from others.

Note: *Māshā Allāh*, look at how well Hadrat Muslihul Ummat knew the conditions of the people of his time. This is essential for every reformer. Without it, the task of reformation and rectification cannot be undertaken.

2. Nowadays, people have confined the *Dīn* to the external self. Their clothing and outer appearance is like that of the religious, they perform a few external acts of worships such as salāh, fasting, etc. and then assume that they are perfectly righteous people. Whereas their internal self is exactly like that of the flagrant sinners and immoral persons, their character is like flagrant sinners, their transactions are like theirs, and so are their social relationships. Yet they claim to be religious. This is most astonishing.

Nowadays, it is difficult to direct people towards internal rectification. Firstly, a person tries not to allow his mentor to fathom his internal self. If the mentor fathoms it through his insight, the person will not admit it immediately. Instead, his self (*nafs*) will evade it. If it is proven to him through proofs, incidents, and words and actions which emanate from him from time to time, that his internal self is as it was diagnosed [by his mentor], only then will he admit, and then turn his attention to rectifying his self.

3. I have said this many times, and am saying it again: The mutual conflict which we see among the Muslims is due to their gazes falling on each other's wealth, and expecting things from others. When their expectations are not fulfilled, they oppose them. This results in mutual conflict and disagreement. The fact of the matter is that when a person casts his gaze [expectations] on others apart from Allāh *taʿālā*, this is what it results in. This illness [of expecting from others] has crept into every home. The father's gaze is on his son's earnings, the brother's gaze is on his brother's earnings, a friend's gaze is on the wealth of his friend. This has resulted in mutual disputes, and every house has succumbed to disruption.

The astonishing thing is that people are worried and concerned about the wealth of others, but when they stand up against each other, each one will say to the other: "I am not bothered about you in the least, I do not consider you to be worth anything."

I say: O you foolish one! It was this very concern and consideration which caused this entire dispute and made you stand up against each other. Yet you are denying it!? This is what is known as hypocrisy. Hypocrisy is nothing but portraying something which is different from what is in the heart. This is the root of all domestic disputes.

Note: This is why Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* advised the *ummah* as follows:

واجمع اليأس عما في أيدي الناس

Make yourself completely independent [to the extent of losing hope] of the wealth and riches which people possess.

4. There are many people who come here, but some of them do not derive any benefit. Do you know why? It is because this is the way of etiquette and confidence. When a person teaches in a school, a student learns from him irrespective of whether he has confidence in the teacher or not. Even if he has no respect for the teacher, he will study under him and acquire knowledge from him. These people consider *'ilm-e-baṯin* (internal spiritual knowledge) to be the same. They feel there is no need to have confidence in the shaykh or to observe any etiquette before him. Philosophy is taught and studied, and philosophical facts are memorized; but there is no confidence or belief in the philosophers. In the same way, people learn and memorize the teachings of the shaykh after considering them to be good and beneficial. But they do not believe in them from their hearts. This is why they do not derive any internal spiritual benefit.

It is as though *ta<u>s</u>awwuf* is also one of the many sciences and subjects. Whereas it is a practical and realistic matter. Look at H̲ad̲rat H̲akīmul Ummat *rah̲imahullāh*. He was such a personality that if a person derived proper benefit from him, thousands of others would be rectified through him. But many people acquired this [*ta<u>s</u>awwuf*] from him after considering it to be a mere academic subject. They learnt and memorized the different subjects of the *ṯarīqah*, and a few *masā'il* (rules and regulations) of *ta<u>s</u>awwuf*, and nothing else. I heard this numerous

times from Hadrat Hakīmul Ummat *rahimahullāh* that if any person asked Hadrat Hājī Imdādullāh Sāhib Muhājir Makkī *rahimahullāh* any *mas'alah* (ruling) with regard to *tasawwuf*, he would reprimand the person and say: "Do you think this is a *madrasah*? If I ever feel like discussing it, I will explain it to you."

5. The condition of people today is such that if you were to observe their acts of worship and devotional practices, they would appear to be Shiblī *rahimahullāh* and Junayd *rahimahullāh*. But if you were to look at their character and dealings, they would be no lesser than Pharaoh. People come here to me and want my admiration over every trivial matter. What an unfortunate and shameful thing – they come here for rectification (*islāh*), but they want admiration! In other words, they are making a display of *Dīn* while their real intent is this world. This is what is known as hypocrisy. They do not even have any knowledge of it, but they want to profit from it. Whereas this is such a serious defect in whose presence, perfection in *sulūk* is impossible. In order for perfection [in *sulūk*] to be realized, it is essential for a person to have knowledge of his faults and defects. Once a person knows his faults, you can conclude that there is no obstacle to his progress towards perfection. Maulānā Rūm *rahimahullāh* says:

> Once a person identifies and recognizes his shortcomings and failings, he will hasten as quickly as possible towards his rectification and perfection. As for the opposite person, he does not even bother

about hastening towards Allāh *taʿālā* because he makes claims to perfection.

It is therefore the duty of an erudite shaykh to apprise his *murīd* of his failings and direct him towards their treatment. This is why I inform those who come here of their faults, and I observe to what extent they tried to rectify their faults. I do not ask them how much *waẕīfahs* (devotional practices) they read. Brother! If you read your *waẕīfahs*, Allāh *taʿālā* will accept them and reward you for them. This is a matter which is connected with Allāh *taʿālā*. The more wheat you put into the grinder, the more flour you will get. But together with this, there is a severe need for rectification of character. Without it, you can neither reach Allāh *taʿālā* nor reach a level of perfection. In fact, it may well be that your acts of worship are not accepted because of your bad character.

6. Nowadays people give the excuse of a bad environment for not being able to rectify their selves. I say: Using the excuse of the environment is most foolish. What do you mean by environment? Does it not mean that a few people get together, decide to carry out a particular task, and lay down certain correct or incorrect principles for carrying it out? This is what an environment is. Yet we see a person living in a certain environment and is not influenced in the least by it. We therefore conclude that the excuse of the environment is totally wrong. Rather, it is the weakness of your temperament. A temperament which has affinity with a wrong environment, will be attracted to it and absorbed by it. As for the person who is strong-hearted, when he

sees such a bad environment, he will distance his self from it, and create his own environment.

After all, are the people who come here [to the *khānqāh*] coming to a bad environment? Why, then, do they have bad character despite living here? If an environment had total and absolute influence, they ought to have been rectified and put right. From those who come here, I see some of them giving up all evils by coming just one or two times, and they become devoted to the path immediately. While there are others who are coming here for several years, but their rectification is not realized. In fact, they do not even make an intention of rectification. How, then, can it be realized!?

7. I am telling you something which is most essential. If you act accordingly, you will be able to live your lives easily and you may well obtain a few sincere friends. If not, outwardly you may have a lot of friends around you, but some hypocrites will also join in, causing all your work to go to waste.

This is what you will have to do: In today's times, do not be hasty in relying on anyone, nor be hasty in making anyone your confidant. If you do this, only the ones who thinks like you will come to you. There will be few like this, and the remainder will automatically separate themselves from you. We are not able to achieve much in today's times because people desire large numbers from the very beginning. Consequently, insincere people also join in, and these are the ones who spoil all the work. So we have to differentiate between the sincere and the insincere. After all, the object is to do the work, not to have large numbers. What benefit is there in

large numbers? If you have sincere workers, and they are few in number, then this is best. After all, the real workers are always in the minority. Allāh *taʿālā* says:

إِلَّا الَّذِيْنَ اٰمَنُوْا وَعَمِلُوا الصّٰلِحٰتِ، وَقَلِيْلٌ مَّا هُمْ

Except those who believe and do good deeds. And they are very few.

Unfortunately, people say that as long as they do not have a large audience, they cannot speak, and the subject matter does not come to their mind. This is absolutely wrong; it negates sincerity. A person used to say with regard to Hadrat Maulānā Thānwī *rahimahullāh*: "Look, he has an audience of women whom he addresses for two to three hours. Since they are in a curtained off section, we do not even know whether they are listening or sleeping; whether they are still seated there or whether they have left. It is really very difficult to deliver a talk in such a situation, and it cannot be accomplished without sincerity." We learn from this that if there is sincerity, everything can be achieved. The mark of a sincere person is [as mentioned in the following couplet]:

> Irrespective of whether anyone listens to me or not, I am going to continue speaking.

8. On one occasion, a few hypocrites were walking along and saying something about Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam*. Someone said to them: "Do not speak like this. If Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* were to hear about it, it

will not be good for you.” They replied: “He is all ears. If someone were to complain about us to him, he will accept our apology. After all, he accepts everything whatever anyone says.” Allāh *taʿālā* revealed these verses:

قُلْ أُذُنُ خَيْرٍ لَّكُمْ

Say: He is all ears for your own good.[1]

Another translation of the above is that he listens to the good which you speak, and not everything. Do not be deluded into thinking otherwise.

As for Rasūlullāh *s̲allallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* appearing to listen to everyone – believers and hypocrites – the nature of this is that he attests and affirms what a believer says, and merely listens to a hypocrite without affirming what he says. Affirming what the believers say is certainly to their advantage. But how can listening to the hypocrites without affirming what they say be to their advantage? An answer to this is that when they see Rasūlullāh *s̲allallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* listening to them but not affirming what they say as he does with the believers, they will realize that their rank is lower than the sincere believers whose were given an ear, and their words were also attested. They will think about this, regret it, be ashamed about it in their hearts, and it may well happen that some of them will develop the desire to reach the rank of the sincere ones. If this happens, it is obviously good for them.

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[1] Sūrah at-Taubah, 9: 61.

9. The following description of Rasūlullāh sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam is mentioned in the biographies:

كان صلى الله عليه وسلم يتفقد أصحابه ويسئل الناس عما في الناس، ويحسن الحسنة ويصوبه، ويقبح القبيح ويوهنه.

Rasūlullāh sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam used to enquire and ask about the conditions and situations of his Companions. He used to make inquiries about incidents which occurred among them so that the one who is wronged could be helped, and the one who committed the wrong could be rectified. He would express his agreement and admiration for those incidents which were good, and disparage those which were bad.

Even today, it is essential for a reformer or mentor to adopt this methodology. If he does this, he will be emulating the Sunnah.

Note: This shows that this is an extremely important chapter from the life of Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam*. Just as it is essential to follow his other Sunan (plural of Sunnah), it is necessary to emulate the above-mentioned Sunnah. Only then will a person be eligible to be referred to as a follower of the Sunnah.

10. There is a specific season when people from the surrounding areas come to me and express their confidence in me. During this season, I observe a general awakening among the Muslims. The young, the old, women, children – everyone – has an enthusiasm to do good deeds. This season is at the time of elections or any other similar political

need. I receive letters from all quarters, delegations come to meet me, individuals come one after the other. They all express the same reason for coming, i.e. solely to obtain my *duʿā's*. But it is a very delicate and difficult time for me because if I do not meet them, they will say: "He is very discourteous. Muslims are coming to him for *duʿā'* but he is not even prepared to meet them." In fact, my conscience does not permit me to refuse meeting them. And if I were to meet them, then after departing from here, each person will claim: "He is in line with our thinking." They then attribute incorrect things to me and create problems for everyone. Now I do not know what to do with them. I have tried a soft approach, a stern approach, and everything else; and I have concluded that they all have some motive or the other. This is why I no longer perceive any of these things. I now have no honour. I have been reduced to humiliation and nothing else. I seek refuge in Allāh *taʿālā*.

Note: I [Muhammad Qamaruz Zamān] too could not save myself from the plague and ill effects of the elections. There is a lot of mutual sedition and disputes. The ill effects of this compelled Hadrat Muslihul Ummat *rahimahullāh* to leave his beloved hometown, Fatahpūr Tālnarjā, settle down in Gorukpūr, and then in Allāhābād. O Allāh! Rectify the *ummah* of Muhammad *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam*.

11. The Qur'ān states:

مَرَدُوْا عَلَى النِّفَاقِ، لَا تَعْلَمُهُمْ نَحْنُ نَعْلَمُهُمْ

They are obstinate in hypocrisy. You do not know them, We are aware of them.[1]

In other words, O Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam*! You cannot identify them, We are fully aware of them.

They were so particular about concealing their unbelief and portraying belief, that in spite of Rasūlullāh's *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* perfect insight, he could not recognize them. Only Allāh *taʿālā*, the knower of all mysteries and secrets, was fully aware of them. Allāh *taʿālā* says further on:

وَلَوْ نَشَاءُ لَأَرَيْنٰكُمْ

Had We willed, We would have showed them to you.

وَلَتَعْرِفَنَّهُمْ فِيْ لَحْنِ الْقَوْلِ

You will recognize them by their sweet tones.

This was one way of recognizing them. Maulānā Rūm *rahimahullāh* says that there is a difference in sound between a pot of raw food and of cooked food when placed on a stove. In like manner, there is a difference in the speech and tone of a sincere believer and a hypocrite. The *ʿārifīn* (those who have truly recognized Allāh *taʿālā*) are able to recognize this from the eyes of people because the eyes are mirrors of the heart.

Note: However, there is a need for the *nūr* (light) of insight and foresight. May Allāh *taʿālā* bestow it to us through His grace.

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[1] Sūrah at-Taubah, 9: 101.

12. Nowadays, going to the *buzurgs* (pious personalities) has become a mere custom. This is why people are not benefiting. When people of the past used to go to a *buzurg*, they would go with their hearts, and this is why they used to derive benefit. Their deriving more benefit was not because they had more time to spare or they did not have any worldly needs. This was not the case. They also had very little time, they also encountered the same worldly challenges. But when they used to go to the *buzurgs*, they used to go with sincerity. They used to attend the assemblies of the *buzurgs* with the intention of listening and practising. This is why they used to benefit.

But today, our going and coming is not for the sake of practising. This is why we do not benefit. Even if today, people were to go to the *buzurgs* with their hearts and listen to their talks attentively, they would still benefit. I have watched and observed; those who do this are benefiting. Those who do not do this, they go to the *buzurgs* for many years, but remain exactly as they were at the beginning – without making any progress.

13. A *maulwī s̲āh̲ib* [Maulānā] came to meet me together with a few other *ʿulamāʼ*. When he went back to his house, some of his *ʿulamāʼ* friends gathered around him and one of them said: "I heard you went to Fatah̲pūr. What did you see there? And what did you hear there?"

The *maulwī s̲āh̲ib* himself related to me that he did not provide any details to the questioner, but gave the gist of his impressions, and added: "H̲ad̲rat

Maulānā rekindles suppressed emotions. He rekindles the ember of *īmān* which is lying suppressed in a believer's heart." On hearing this, that *ʿālim* [who had posed the questions] said: "Brother, you are right and you are speaking the truth. This is exactly what happens there, and there are very few people like him in our times who are able to rekindle religious sentiments. And this is what we really need today."

When I heard this, I was very pleased by our *maulwī s̱āḫib's* impressions, and also the other *ʿālim's* agreement with him.

14. I was reading an article in which the writer laments the fact that the services which the past Sufis rendered to Islam and Muslims have not been preserved, but the services of Ḫaḏrat Ḫakīmul Ummat Maulānā Ashraf ʿAlī Thānwī *raḫimahullāh* which he rendered to the *Dīn* and the *ṯarīqah* are – *al-ḫamdulillāh* – well preserved, and are quite sufficient to quench our thirst.

I say: Firstly, it is incorrect to say that the services of the past Sufis have not been preserved, because even now, the lives, biographies, teachings, and methodologies of reformation and rectification are found in books. But the people have no thirst for these things. If they were thirsty, they would certainly find the sources of water. Furthermore, they would also learn that this thirst is not quenchable. In fact, it increases one's thirst.

15. There were times when I reprimanded a person for committing a certain wrong, and another person benefited tremendously from it. On one

occasion, a person who had a bond with H̲ad̲rat Maulānā Thānwī *rah̲imahullāh* came to me from a very distant place. This person was also an *ʿālim*. Coincidentally, I chased away a man because he intended joining a few thieves to cause harm to people. On seeing this, the *maulwī s̲āh̲ib* said to him: "On seeing and listening to your softness and leniency, I thought to myself that it seems as if you have moved away from the way of H̲ad̲rat [Thānwī] *rah̲imahullāh*. But today I have become convinced [that you have not moved away from his way] and my doubts have been removed."

I have come to the conclusion that the view of some people that softness and leniency are beneficial while sternness is harmful has caused people to have incorrect beliefs. This is not an all-embracing principle. I have seen some people benefiting from harshness in the sense that leniency causes them to waver in their faith. If this is the case, why do some people speak out against harshness and sternness?

16. I do not permit anyone and everyone to attend my assembly (*majlis*). Rather, I only permit the one whose objective is the *Dīn* and is prepared for his reformation. If there is no reprimanding, if the condition of *Dīn* is not laid down, if the sincere and insincere are not differentiated, there will be a large number of those who attend. But of what benefit will this large number be when there is not a single person of worth in it? I am very particular about checking those who come here and undertake many investigations about their

conditions because you occasionally get thieves coming here in the form of Sufis.

Just recently, two youngsters came to me saying: “We will learn *Dīn* and give up our bad habits.” When they thought that they have now earned the confidence and trust of the people here, one of them stole some rupees belonging to someone in the *khānqāh*. Instead of keeping the money with him, he threw it on the roof of the bathroom. The two were very sly and refused to admit. Coincidentally, there was a doctor who was present here and he began checking the pulse of all who were present. The pulse of these two boys was very quick, and it was pulsating with a strange anxiety. Despite this, these two refused to admit their wrong.

I said: “Bring the two to me.” I was not feeling too well at the time, and my associates, taking my condition into consideration, did not want to refer the matter to me. They wanted to solve it themselves. They had no alternative but to bring the two to me.

I scolded one of them harshly and said: “Speak the truth and tell me whether you stole or not.” He said that he did not steal, but it was the other fellow, and he knows about it. Thus, the matter was solved, the money was found, and the two were expelled from the *khānqāh* of Fataẖpūr Tālnarjā, district Mau.

I learnt from people that these two were so sly and cunning that when they were about to leave their homes, they had said: “While we were at home, we

used to steal. When we go to the *khānqāh*, we will steal there as well."

Later on, these two thieves came to me and asked me to pardon them. I said to them: "I will only pardon you if you tell me exactly the different places from where you had stolen." They listed each place to me. I said to them: "Now go to each of those places and ask the owners to pardon you." They went and sought pardon. Some people pardoned them, while others did not. The latter said: "You stole a lot of our possessions. We will not pardon you."

These are some of the incidents which we experienced. Now if I am not going to be vigilant, every Tom, Dick and Harry will come here and fill this place.

17. The S̲ah̲ābah *rad̲iyallāhu ʿanhum* not only handed over all their wealth but even their lives for Rasūlullāh *s̲allallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam*, and were still happy. On the other hand, he had to personally ask the hypocrites to help from their wealth, but they were so internally depraved that they would remain displeased with Rasūlullāh *s̲allallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* from the depths of their hearts to the extent of taking part in the conspiracy to murder him. There was a person by the name of Jalās to whom Rasūlullāh *s̲allallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* had given 12 000 dirhams, and added another 2 000 to it. According to another narration, he had a debt and Rasūlullāh *s̲allallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* paid it on his behalf. Despite all this, he joined in the conspiracy to murder Rasūlullāh *s̲allallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam*. This shows that self-

motives and disregard for a person's favours are also from among the traits of hypocrites.

Note: This is very common nowadays. One cannot even rely on one's closest associates and *murīds*. We seek refuge in Allāh *taʿālā*.

18. Humiliation is the punishment which is to be meted out to hypocrites. Even Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* expelled them from his assembly. Tabarānī *rahimahullāh* narrates from Hadrat ʿAbdullāh ibn ʿAbbās *radiyallāhu ʿanhu* who said: One day, Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* stood up to deliver the Friday sermon, and said:

قم يا فلان فاخرج، فإنك منافق. اخرج يا فلان، فإنك منافق

O such and such person! Stand up and leave because you are a hypocrite. O such and such person, you also leave because you are a hypocrite.

In this way, Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* listed the names of thirty six people and asked them to leave, causing them much humiliation. Due to some need, Hadrat ʿUmar *radiyallāhu ʿanhu* had not arrived for the Jumuʿah salāh as yet, and was still walking towards the musjid. When he saw these hypocrites approaching, he became ashamed [over his delay] and concealed himself, thinking that the Jumuʿah salāh is now over. On the other hand, when the hypocrites saw Hadrat ʿUmar *radiyallāhu ʿanhu*, they also concealed themselves, thinking to themselves that he must have learnt about what happened to them, and this does not bode well for them. When Hadrat ʿUmar *radiyallāhu ʿanhu* reached the musjid, he saw that the people

had not completed the salāh as yet. On seeing him, a person said to him: "O ʿUmar! Glad tidings! Allāh *taʿālā* exposed the hypocrites today."[1]

Did you see! This is Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* – the mercy to the worlds – and who can be better than him in character? Despite this, look at the severe punishment he meted out to the hypocrites. The fact of the matter is that this was the treatment which was prescribed for them. We learn from the Hadīth that the more chronic an illness, the stronger the medication and treatment.

Even today, seeing that evil characteristics and spiritual ailments have become firmly embedded in people, and experience also teaches us that let alone giving them up, they do not even perceive them without harsh reprimanding and severe scolding; the *ʿulamā'* and *mashā'ikh* resort to some severity in their system of rectification and reformation. This being the case, how can their system of rectification be labelled extreme? How can they be referred to as impolite and discourteous? How can their approach be said to be against the Sunnah?

19. The harm which is being caused to Islam today is not from outsiders, but from Muslims themselves. Look at this small district in which we are living. If everyone becomes religious and adheres to the Sharīʿah, will the British stop us? Will the government prevent us? There are no prohibitions from anyone. The difficulty which we

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[1] روح المعاني، ج ١١، ص ١٠.

feel in *Dīn* is because of the corruption in our selves. This is why I say, set right your condition first. If you do this, you will acquire success and the enmity of the unbelievers will automatically come to an end. When we say this to them, they say: "We do not have the time to rectify our selves at the moment. We have to sort out the unbelievers first and defeat them first." I say, if people only focus on reforming their own residential areas, so much will be achieved. But they say: "No. We must first reform other places, and then we will think about our own residential areas." This is the condition of our people! How, then, can there be any reformation!?

20. The S̲ah̲ābah *rad̲iyallāhu ʿanhum* did not display as many *karāmāt* and *kharq ʿādāt* (miracles and super natural feats) as was displayed by the pious personalities who came after them. H̲ad̲rat Maulānā Thānwī *rah̲imahullāh* explains the reason for this as follows: The S̲ah̲ābah *rad̲iyallāhu ʿanhum* had such firm conviction in the Hereafter that they did not need anything extraordinary to increase their conviction. This belief [in the Hereafter] became weak in the latter generations. So Allāh *taʿālā* enabled His *auliyā'* to perform *karāmāt* which strengthened the conviction of the people, and also entrenched the *īmān* of others.

But there can be an objection to this, viz. belief in the Hereafter has become weaker at present, so there ought to be even more *karāmāt* now. Whereas there are fewer *karāmāt* than before. One answer to this has been given by Maulānā Muh̲ammad ʿAlī Maungerī *rah̲imahullāh*. He says that this era is not

an era of guidance, but an era of misguidance. And the display of a *karāmat* is a form of guidance. Other scholars have given other answers to this objection. The selves of people have retrogressed so much that even if they were to witness a supernatural feat with their own eyes, they will reject the person, and therefore become eligible for Allāh's *taʿālā* wrath. This is similar to how unbelievers in the past were not punished immediately. But when they rejected the miracles of the Prophets *ʿalayhis salām*, thereby confirming their obstinacy and Allāh's evidence becoming established against them, Allāh's punishment descended. This is the reason for a dearth of *karāmāt* in our times.

21. There are some servants of Allāh *taʿālā* who are living in comfort on soft luxurious beds, but their bond with Allāh *taʿālā* is genuine. On the other hand, there are others who do not even own shoes to wear, but are moving about like penniless Pharaohs. The pious elders would occasionally wear expensive garments so that they may think of the bounties of Paradise and appreciate what they have. On one occasion, Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* wore a sheet which cost 1 000 dirhams. A person came around selling a garment, but the king could not afford to buy it. But Hadrat Sayyidunā ʿAbd al-Qādir Jīlānī *rahimahullāh* purchased it.

22. Sinners also recognize the grace of Allāh *taʿālā*, but these pious people who are engaged in worship do not even think of Allāh's mercy in passing too. They assume they will acquire Paradise

by their own strength, and this is what they focus on. On the other hand, a poor sinner thinks to himself: What do I have? I have nothing. The only refuge which I have is the grace and pardon of Allāh *taʿālā*. This in itself enables him to succeed, while the pious fall into difficulties. Hadrat Hājī Sāhib *rahimahullāh* says:

> The proud ascetic could not traverse the path safely. But the irreligious and free-thinking person reached Dār as-Salām (Paradise) by virtue of his submission and servitude.

23. The acquisition of *nisbat* (affinity with Allāh *taʿālā*) is an achievable matter. Allāh *taʿālā* conferred both types of capability for its acquisition, viz. *istitāʿat-e-mumkinah* and *istitāʿat-e-muyassarah*. The first means that man has the power and choice to acquire this *nisbat* by his will. But because it is difficult to acquire despite being within his capacity, Allāh *taʿālā* provided him with the second, viz. *istitāʿat-e-muyassarah*. This means that he must remain in the company of the righteous and practise on the different forms of devotional practices which they prescribe for him. In this way, it will be easy for him to acquire *nisbat*.

24. Hadrat Maulānā Shabbīr Ahmad ʿUthmānī Sāhib *rahimahullāh* was present in one of Hadrat's assemblies. Hadrat Maulānā Thānwī *rahimahullāh* said that an easy way to acquire a bond with Allāh *taʿālā* is to seat yourself in the hearts of the *Ahlullāh* because their hearts are already connected to Allāh *taʿālā*. Once you make a place for yourself in their hearts, your bond with Allāh *taʿālā* will also

be established. On hearing this, Maulānā Shabbīr Ahmad Sāhib *rahimahullāh* said: “Wāh Hadrat, wāh! Glory to Allāh! What a beautiful thing you said.” On hearing this response from him, our Hadrat quoted the following couplet from the *Mathnawī*:

> It is surprising that I settle in the heart of a believer. So if you are searching for Me, search in his [believer’s] heart.

Hadrat Hājī Sāhib *rahimahullāh* has a couplet on the same theme:

> Who is the one who placed in my heart that Being whom inhabitants of the heavens and earth could not find?

25. No one is rejected after love because a lover is not just a lover but a beloved as well. Once *nisbat* has been acquired from both sides, how can it go away? Even if it wants to go away, how can it be allowed to go? A poet says:

> I am trying to forget him but he is coming to my mind. It is he who wills, what will have I of my own?

26. With regard to the Hadīth:

ألا إن في الجسد مضغة...

Listen! There is a piece of flesh in the body…

The author of *Fath al-Bārī* writes: “This is from among those Ahādīth around which revolves *Dīn*. The translation of the entire Hadīth is: “Listen! There is a piece of flesh in the body; if it is sound, the entire body will be sound. If it is unsound, the

entire body will be unsound. Listen! It is the heart." The unsoundness of the body which we are seeing all around us shows that the hearts have become unsound. So what doubt can there be in the greatness of the person who rectifies it!? Rectification of the heart means that it must be embellished with correct beliefs and laudable character. Corruption of the heart is when it is soiled by false beliefs and evil characteristics.

27. Patience cannot be realized without bravery. A person who is patient will also be brave. A wrestler was vulgar towards Hadrat Maulānā Muhammad Ismā'īl Sāhib Shahīd *rahimahullāh*. Hadrat *rahimahullāh* was also accompanied by a wrestler, and the latter wanted to kill the other with his sword. Hadrat *rahimahullāh* stopped him, held his hand and said: "Yes, yes, what do you want to do? You want to kill a Muslim? What did he say? All he said was that I am teaching new things. So he did not say anything wrong, he was right in what he said. When did the *'ulamā'* teach these people matters of *Dīn*? This is why he considers my teachings to be new." On hearing this, the other wrestler [who was vulgar towards Hadrat] softened his approach, was overtaken by Hadrat's character, became his follower, and used to frequent Hadrat's assemblies.

28. If all the *'ulamā'* and *mashā'ikh* were to take up the task of reformation and rectification, ask people to become sincere, reprimand them for their hypocritical ways, show them their evil ways whereby they would realize their real worth; then it will be impossible for any ignorant person to have

the audacity to speak out against any *ʿālim*. But when we [*ʿulamā’* and *mashā’ikh*] did not make ourselves worthy enough to enjoy the public's confidence and to establish our importance in their hearts – and instead, became dependent on them – how will they ever follow us and listen to us?

29. The most important *wa<u>z</u>īfah* (devotional practice) in my *khānqāh* is *ikhlā<u>s</u>* (sincerity). Once you develop and acquire this, you can conclude you have acquired everything. If you did not acquire it, then even if you acquire everything else, you have acquired nothing.

30. The pious elders have written: A person who gives up sins out of Allāh's fear is known as a *tā'ib*. A person who gives them up out of bashfulness before Allāh *taʿālā* is known as a *munīb*. And the one who gives it up as a result of Allāh's *taʿālā* greatness and grandeur is known as an *awwāh*.

<u>Note</u>: Glory to Allāh! What a wonderful explanation.

31. Shāh Walī Allāh <u>S</u>ā<u>h</u>ib *ra<u>h</u>imahullāh* writes in *Tafhīmāt* that it is Satan's objective to create whisperings and doubts about Allāh's oneness, and moves a person away from Him in this way. Similarly, he casts whisperings about Rasūlullāh *<u>s</u>allallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam*. Satan also casts doubts about the shaykh (spiritual mentor) who is a representative of Rasūlullāh *<u>s</u>allallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam*. He does this because Allāh *taʿālā* is the objective, and he is bent on shifting the person away from this objective. Since Rasūlullāh *<u>s</u>allallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* and the shaykh are means to the objective, he tries to remove the

person away from them as well. So whenever you experience any whisperings about your shaykh, you must conclude that they are from Satan.

32. A woman wrote to me thus: The women of my neighbourhood come to my house and they start backbiting (*ghībah*). I have to listen to their backbiting, and join them as well. But once they leave, I feel regret over what I did.

The following reply was sent to her: Do not listen to backbiting, and do not talk about others. The regret which you are experiencing later on is actually your *nafs lawwāmah* (the reprimanding self) which in itself is a great thing. It will gradually convey you to *nafs mutma'innah* (the satisfied and tranquil self). When the evil of a sin is fully realized, it [the sin] disappears automatically. A person first experiences grief and regret over a thing. It is only realized and acquired after that. The *mashā'ikh* warn and reprimand with the aim of acquiring that grief and regret. Lack of concern is now beyond the limits among the people. This is why they are not succeeding.

Note: The *mashā'ikh* nurture concern and regret in the heart of a seeker (*tālib*) so that the heart may develop rectification.

33. Hadrat Maulānā [Thānwī] *rahimahullāh* appointed some people as *mujāz suhbat.*[1] For many days I assumed this stemmed from his erudition

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[1] A *mujāz suhbat* is a person who has been conferred *khilāfat* (deputyship) by his shaykh, but he cannot induct any *murīds* under him.

and that he was unique in this regard. But later on I learnt from a reliable source that Hadrat Maulānā Rāipūrī *rahimahullāh* also had a few of his associates as *mujāz suhbat*. I found support from this for Hadrat's [Thānwī] action, and it increased my confidence in him. After this, I found this in the writings of past Sufis as well. This made me overjoyed and it resulted in perfection in my confidence for him. I realized that this had been the practice of the *mashā'ikh* since a long time.

34. All our works are spoilt because we have no collective system and there is no unity among us. Each person gives free vent to his own opinions. No one wants to follow anyone. Let alone outsiders, look at the *murīds* themselves. They do not follow their shaykhs totally. Now you tell me, if a *murīd* does not listen to what his shaykh says, what strength will there be in whatever he says? And what effect will there be in his actions? People do not bother about this and still want to see results. If the principles and perquisites are not adhered to, how can anything be achieved?

The Ahādīth make mention of the *bay'ah* of the Sahābah *radiyallāhu 'anhum*. We learn from it that they considered *bay'ah* to mean complete and total submission of one's self, after which there was no question of one's own opinions and own will.

Hadrat 'Ubādah ibn Sāmit *radiyallāhu 'anhu* relates: "We pledged *bay'ah* to Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu 'alayhi wa sallam* on hearing and obeying – whether in difficulty or ease, whether we like it or not – on [obedience] even if we are discriminated against [e.g. in distribution of booty, in

appointment to posts], that we do not dispute with those who have been given authority over us unless we see an apparent act of unbelief for which we have proof from Allāh, and that we state the truth with regard to the injunctions of Allāh *taʿālā* wherever we are without fearing the criticism of critics."[1]

Now just look at our own condition today. If the shaykh were to appoint someone as a *khalīfah*, others will be envious of the person, and will harbour dissent against the shaykh in their hearts for this action of his. The first step of our system is not right [how will the remaining structure come right]?

Note: *Māshā Allāh*! This is a very beneficial and enlightening statement. It ought to be etched on our hearts and put into practice.

35. One of the reasons why the lot of Muslims is not improving is that in every village, town and city there are some *ʿulamā'*, business leaders, lawyers, and doctors who are all seeking authority, and there is a continuous battle for leadership among them. As for the ordinary laymen, they will join the one with whom they have affinity. In this way, the entire community is broken up into groups, their unity is scattered, and nothing can be achieved peacefully.

The only way to rectify this deplorable situation is to establish unity among the leaders, and for them to abstain speaking out and complaining against

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[1] al-Bukhārī: 7199. Muslim, *Kitāb al-imārah*: 41

each other. The shaykh or *ʿālim* who is looked up with respect should not tolerate listening to any complaints of one against the other. He must prohibit this practice, and if anyone does it, he must be expelled.

Note: If this advice is heeded, the atmosphere of complaining and disgruntlement will soon change to one of love and affection. And the damaged society will experience a new spring.

36. It is the duty of Muslims to make arrangements for the *Dīnī* education of their children. They must at least receive so much of Islamic education whereby they do not remain ignorant of their *Dīn* and *īmān*. As for the children who are seeking Western education, a special time must be set aside for them wherein they are taught Islamic knowledge.

Note: Hadrat Muslihul Ummat *rahimahullāh* made the majority of the above statements in Fatahpūr Tālnarjā, district Mau, in the light of the conditions and situation there. But these conditions are not confined to the villagers. They are found in the cities, and even in our religious organizations. Quoting these statements is therefore most beneficial.

There is a need to carefully study Hadrat's statements which have been quoted from *Tahdhīr al-ʿUlamā'*. Similarly, those which are related to hypocrisy and quoted from *Wasīyyatul Ihsān* should also be read with an open heart with the intention of practising on them. *Inshā Allāh*, this will create an abhorrence for the illness of

hypocrisy, and – *inshā Allāh* – this illness will be cured. This is certainly not difficult for Allāh *taʿālā*.

PRIDE

اَلْحَمْدُ لِلّٰهِ رَبِّ الْعَالَمِيْنَ، وَالصَّلٰوةُ وَالسَّلَامُ عَلٰى رَسُوْلِهِ الْكَرِيْمِ، وَعَلٰى آلِهِ وَصَحْبِهِ أَجْمَعِيْنَ، وَعَلٰى كُلِّ مَنْ تَبِعَهُمْ بِإِحْسَانٍ إِلٰى يَوْمِ الدِّيْنِ. أَمَّا بَعْدُ.

Since quite some time I had wanted to write a book in the Urdu language on the subject of evil characteristics[1] wherein the nature of each characteristic and its treatment are discussed in a very simple and detailed manner which could be understood by all. However, certain matters arose which caused a delay in this.

I now commence this subject in the name of Allāh *taʿālā*. May Allāh *taʿālā* help me. Āmīn. Inspiration is solely from Allāh *taʿālā*.

My heart desires to commence the subject with the words of our elders so that we may receive their blessings, and whatever we are to say thereafter may be considered to be an explanation and elucidation of their words. I am first quoting the words of Maulānā Ismāʿīl Shahīd Dehlawī *rahimahullāh* from *Sirāt Mustaqīm*.

> Second section on the rectification of character

[1] We are focussing on evil characteristics because there is a general weakness in this regard, and the cause of the Muslims' corruption in matters of *Dīn* and *dunyā* (this world) is the presence of these evil traits in them. Writing on this subject is therefore more important and more preferable. It may well happen that we will write about praiseworthy characteristics by the way.

In short, this section contains an explanation of praiseworthy and blameworthy characteristics. It is made up of three preludes, and five points.

First prelude: A major obstacle to the descent of Allāh's grace and affection to those treading the path of Truth is when their selves are tainted with the presence of evil characteristics and animalistic traits such as stinginess, jealousy, pride, backbiting, malice, ostentation, lies, greed, avarice, etc.

Consequently, the pious predecessors considered purification from these evil characteristics to be most important and the first priority. Solely for Allāh's *taʿālā* pleasure, they would put an end to these traits from their hearts in a manner which left behind no traces whatsoever, and their hearts would become absolutely pure and clean. This would result in the pouring down of Allāh's *taʿālā* countless favours and bounties. By virtue of this internal purification which these personalities imbibed solely for Allāh's *taʿālā* pleasure, they would become accepted in His court.

Later on, so much of importance was not given to these sciences, and their need was not felt. So the erudite *ʿulamā'*, by divine inspiration, composed books and revived these sciences. H̲ujjatul Islam Imām Ghazzālī *rah̲imahullāh* named his magnum opus, *Ih̲yā' ʿUlūm ad-Dīn* (Revival of the Islamic

Sciences), so that these sciences are not completely obliterated. Maulānā Shahīd *ra<u>h</u>imahullāh* continues:

> If a person traverses the prescribed levels of *sulūk* and still does not make himself eligible for divine bestowals, you can conclude that traces of all or some of the evil characteristics are still found within him, and they are posing as obstacles from the descent of these divine bestowals.

Can there be anything more disparaging than people of *sulūk* traversing the different stations of *sulūk* and still being deprived of Allāh's *taʿālā* bestowals and graces?! The erudite *'ulamā'* of every era considered it essential to speak about evil characteristics so that people may learn the need to rid themselves off them. Despite this, the level of consciousness which they ought to have had in this regard is not there. This is why people have been generally falling into various types of evils and harms. Consequently, not only have they fallen into loss as regards their *Dīn* and Hereafter, rather, I can say with conviction and insight that the cause for the worldly destruction of Muslims today is the presence of these very same evil characteristics in them.

Evil characteristics – the cause of loss in this world and in the Hereafter

One may ask the question: Why are these evil characteristics the cause of loss in this world and in the Hereafter, and why have they caused Allāh

taʿālā to shift His gaze of mercy away? The answer to this is that these evil characteristics are the qualities of the unbelievers who are the enemies of Allāh *taʿālā* and are eligible for His wrath. Obviously, how can a person who has the qualities of Allāh's enemies be entitled for His bounties and favours which are reserved for His friends (*auliyā'*)!? Let alone being entitled, how can such a person even expect and hope for Allāh's *taʿālā* bestowals?

Pride – the root of all evil

These evil characteristics are specifically those of the unbelievers, and their root is pride. Pride is essentially the trait of Satan and the unbeliever; not of the believer. Allāh *taʿālā* says in this regard:

إِنَّهُ لَا يُحِبُّ الْمُسْتَكْبِرِيْنَ

Surely He does not like those who are haughty.[1]

Moreover, Rasūlullāh s͟allallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam issued a very severe warning with regard to its repugnance and despicability by saying that a proud person will not enter Paradise. The H͟adīth reads as follows:

عن ابن مسعود رضي الله عنه قال قال رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم: لا يدخل النار أحد في قلبه مثقال حبة من خردل من إيمان، ولا يدخل الجنة أحد في قلبه مثقال حبة من خردل من كبر.[٢]

H͟ad͟rat Ibn Masʿūd rad͟iyallāhu ʿanhu narrates that Rasūlullāh s͟allallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam said: Any

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[1] Sūrah an-Nah͟l,

[2]رواه مسلم، مشكوة شريف، ص ٤٣٣.

person who has īmān equal to a mustard seed in his heart will not enter the Hell-fire. And any person who has pride equal to a mustard seed in his heart will not enter Paradise.

In his commentary to the above Hadīth, Qādī Thanā' Allāh Pānīpattī *rahimahullāh* writes in his *magnum opus, at-Tafsīr al-Mazharī*:

قلت: وجه مقابلة الكبر بالإيمان في الحديث أن المؤمن يرى وجوده وما استتبعه من الكمالات مستعارة من الله تعالى، حتى يرى نفسه عارية عنها، فلا يستكبر. والكافر يرى وجوده وتوابعه من نفسه، فيرى نفسه كبيرا، وينسى الكبير المتعال.[1]

> I say: The reason for comparing pride with *īmān* in the above Hadīth is that a believer considers his very existence and all other capabilities and perfections to be derived from Allāh *taʿālā*. He believes his self to be devoid of all perfections. And so, he does not vex any pride. On the other hand, an unbeliever considers his existence and all other qualities to be his personal achievement. So he considers himself to be great, and forgets the Greatest and the most High [Allāh *taʿālā*].

In like manner, Allāh *taʿālā* says:

وَلَا تَكُوْنُوْا كَالَّذِيْنَ خَرَجُوْا مِنْ دِيَارِهِمْ بَطَرًا وَّرِئَآءَ النَّاسِ

Do not be like those who went forth from their homes conceitedly and to be seen of people…[2]

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[1] التفسير المظهري، سورة النحل، ٢٣.

[2] Sūrah al-Anfāl, 8: 47.

قوله تعالى: وَلَا تَكُوْنُوْا كَالَّذِيْنَ خَرَجُوْا مِنْ دِيَارِهِمْ بَطَرًا وَّرِئَآءَ النَّاسِ الخ. في الروح نهى المؤمنين أن يكونوا أمثالهم في البطر والرياء، وأمرهم بأن يكونوا أهل التقوى والإخلاص، وفيه عن بعضهم حذر الله تعالى بهذه الاية أولياءه عن مشابهة أعدائه.

Allāh taʿālā says: Do not be like those who went forth from their homes conceitedly and to be seen of people... It is stated in Rūh al-Maʿānī in this regard: Allāh taʿālā prohibits the believers from being like the unbelievers in their conceit and ostentation, and orders them to be people of piety and sincerity. Some ʿulamā' state that in this verse, Allāh taʿālā warns His auliyā' (friends) from having any similarity with His enemies.

Now look! The above statements prove what I had said initially, i.e. evil characteristics such as pride, conceitedness, ostentation, etc. are traits of the unbelievers. Thus, in the presence of these traits among us, we cannot be eligible for Allāh's *taʿālā* bestowals and mercies, as was explained by Maulānā Muhammad Ismāʿīl Shahīd *rahimahullāh*.

I say: Maulānā *rahimahullāh* made an excellent observation which is supported by the Qur'ān. Allāh *taʿālā* says:

إِنَّ فِرْعَوْنَ عَلَا فِي الْأَرْضِ وَجَعَلَ أَهْلَهَا شِيَعًا يَّسْتَضْعِفُ طَائِفَةً مِّنْهُمْ يُذَبِّحُ أَبْنَآءَهُمْ وَيَسْتَحِي نِسَآءَهُمْ، إِنَّهُ كَانَ مِنَ الْمُفْسِدِيْنَ. وَنُرِيْدُ أَنْ نَّمُنَّ عَلَى الَّذِيْنَ اسْتُضْعِفُوْا فِي الْأَرْضِ وَنَجْعَلُهُمْ أَئِمَّةً وَّنَجْعَلُهُمْ أَئِمَّةً وَّنَجْعَلُهُمُ الْوَارِثِيْنَ. وَنُمَكِّنَ لَهُمْ فِي الْأَرْضِ وَنُرِيَ فِرْعَوْنَ وَهَامَانَ وَجُنُوْدَهُمَا مِنْهُمْ مَّا كَانُوْا يَحْذَرُوْنَ.

Pharaoh had exalted himself in the land and had made its people into sects. He had suppressed one

group of them: slaughtering their sons and keeping alive their women. Surely he was of those who spread corruption. It is Our will to favour those who were suppressed in the land and to make them leaders and to make them heirs. And to establish them in the land and to show to Pharaoh, Hāmān and their armies that which they feared at their [Banī Isrā'īl's] hands.[1]

In his explanation to the verse, "It is Our will to favour those who were suppressed…", Hadrat Hakīmul Ummat Maulānā Ashraf ʿAlī Thānwī *rahimahullāh* writes in *Masā'il as-Sulūk*:

قال: يدل على أن زوال الكبر رفع لموانع الفضل الإلهي الذي أفضل أفراده إمامة في الدين، كما قال تعالى في هذه الاية: وَنَجْعَلَهُمْ أَئِمَّةً.

This shows that the disappearance of pride actually entails the removal of obstacles from the descent of Allāh's taʿālā grace. And one of the greatest forms of Allāh's taʿālā grace is leadership in Dīn. As stated by Allāh taʿālā Himself: "and to make them leaders."

Look! Hadrat Maulānā Ashraf ʿAlī Thānwī *rahimahullāh* derived the same ruling from this verse as explained by Maulānā Ismāʿīl Shahīd Dehlawī *rahimahullāh* in his first prelude. What Maulānā Thanwī *rahimahullāh* is saying is that when pride comes out of a person, the obstacle for receiving Allāh's *taʿālā* grace has been removed. In other words, when evil characteristics leave a nation and they are imbibed with good character,

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[1] Sūrah al-Qasas, 28: 4-6.

they are worthy of the descent of Allāh's *taʿālā* grace and mercy.

Hadrat Maulānā Shahīd Dehlawī *rahimahullāh* had said the same thing, viz. a major obstacle to the descent of divine mercy and grace is when the self (*nafs*) is soiled by reprehensible and evil characteristics. In short, the essence of the statements of Hadrat Maulānā Dehlawī *rahimahullāh* and Hadrat Maulānā Thānwī *rahimahullāh* is the same. The statement of Maulānā Dehlawī *rahimahullāh* shows an obstruction, i.e. the presence of evil characteristics is an obstacle to divine favours and mercies. While Hadrat Maulānā Thānwī's *rahimahullāh* statement shows that the removal of evil characteristics raises the veil which obstructs the grace of Allāh *taʿālā*, i.e. when this veil is raised, divine mercy descends. So the essence of both is the same. Understand this well.

I now return to quoting the words of Hadrat Maulānā Dehlawī *rahimahullāh*:

> Second prelude: By the inspiration of Allāh *taʿālā*, the good deeds of Islam (such as salāh, fasting, *dhikr*, recitation of the Qur'ān, etc.) and the companionship of pious elders are more than sufficient for the purification of the self from evil characteristics for the pious predecessors.

Look at the essential point which Hadrat Maulānā *rahimahullāh* draws attention to. In other words, he wishes to explain the reason behind the change which has taken place in the methodologies of the

pious predecessors and latter day peoples. The books which latter *'ulamā'* wrote on the signs of ailments, their causes, and then the treatment for each evil trait was for the purpose of informing the people of their spiritual maladies and then reforming and rectifying their selves. Maulānā *rahimahullāh* is saying that the methodology which is in vogue today was not the one which was adopted by the pious predecessors. Rather, by the inspiration and help of Allāh *ta'ālā*, merely carrying out good deeds and remaining in the company of the pious elders were sufficient to purify the selves of these evil traits.

Listen! He is not saying that evil characteristics were not found at all in them. They were certainly found. But they considered their purification to be of paramount importance. So first of all, they were filled with a genuine quest and an internal sincerity which prompted them to uproot these evils from their hearts solely for Allāh's *ta'ālā* pleasure. Secondly, the companionship of their pious elders which they enjoyed was so strong and their blessings so intense, that their sincerity increased in leaps and bounds. These two factors, viz. good deeds done with sincerity and the blessings of the companionship of pious elders, were sufficient for their reformation. This is why they did not need any additional striving.

Later on, when there was a decrease in people's sincerity, and the need and importance of pious companionship was not found to that extent in their minds, it resulted in let alone people not abstaining from evil characteristics, but not even

having any knowledge of them. This is why the *ʿulamāʾ* felt the need to write books on these subjects. But because the essential way of acquiring purity of heart remained pious companionship and sincerity in deeds, these factors could not be acquired from books. So despite the books being very clear on the subject of reformation, they were not sufficient. Hadrat Maulānā *rahimahullāh* elaborates on this point as follows:

> Later on, the elders – that is, *ʿulamāʾ* of the *tarīq* – wrote and compiled books on the signs of these evil traits, their causes, and the methods of treatment just as medical issues are described and detailed in medical books. Although all these books were very clear, they were not sufficient. In fact, people of less courage developed despondency from reading these lengthy books and felt that these were conditions of people who passed on, and are gone to meet Allāh *taʿālā*. Their nature must have been different from ours, thereby enabling them to select and carry out these many and difficult actions. All these things cannot be done by us because there is a vast distance between us and them.
>
> After studying these books, some people misunderstood their import and considered their selves to be pure of these evil characteristics, and assumed that

> they were embellished with their opposites, i.e. with virtuous qualities.
>
> It is therefore important for people of our times to engage in *ashghāl* (devotional practices) and *murāqabāt* (meditations) for the removal of these evil characteristics just as the past pious elders used to engage in them in order to acquire the true recognition of Allāh *taʿālā*. They must realize that as long as these evil traits are not removed, they cannot reach the door of acceptance in Allāh's court. They may reach the rank of true recognition (*maʿrifat*), but it will not be through divine bestowals and acceptance. They will reach it through some other door where there is no differentiation between the accepted and unaccepted ones.

From the above text of Hadrat Maulānā Shahīd *rahimahullāh*, we learn that there are two types of reaching Allāh *taʿālā*. One which is through the path of acceptance. The other is through an unaccepted path. So this essentially means that reaching is not the objective, but acceptance. And the unanimous path of acceptance is the path of the Sunnah. It is the only way of gaining acceptance. Ustādh al-ʿUlamā' Hadrat Maulānā Muhammad Yaʿqūb Sāhib Nānautwī *rahimahullāh* said:

> "The path of acceptance is confined to following the Sunnah. We must turn away from innovations (*bidʿāt*) and customs in our external selves, internal selves, in our

> beliefs and in our actions. This is the basis of following the Sunnah in our times."[1]

The following verse is proof for the above statement:

إِنْ كُنْتُمْ تُحِبُّوْنَ اللهَ فَاتَّبِعُوْنِيْ

If you love Allāh, follow me.

In other words, if a person wants to reach the rank of acceptance [by Allāh *taʿālā*] and to become His beloved, it is essential for him to follow the Sunnah and turn away from *bidʿah*.

We return once again to the words of Hadrat Maulānā Shahīd Dehlawī *rahimahullāh*:

> The self (*nafs*) and Satan are like dogs and guards at the entrance to the court of Allāh's acceptance. This is why these two do not allow people to reach there. After saving one's self from the evils of Satan and the self, it is not possible to reach there without the agency of good deeds and the removal of evil characteristics. Embellishing one's self with good deeds and emptying one's self of evil characteristics are like scouts which automatically convey a person to his destination. Occasionally, you do get Allāh *taʿālā* selecting a person and drawing him to His self. This is known as *jadhb*. In such a case, a person is conveyed to the rank of acceptance

[1] *Maktūbāt Yaʿqūbī*, p. 11.

without having to bear any difficulties and hardships.

Such people do not even need any training and tutoring. Instead, Allāh *taʿālā* Himself becomes their *murabbī* (guide and mentor). Allāh *taʿālā* does not cause such people to be indebted to anyone for the adornment of virtues and removal of evil characteristics, and they do not have to bear any burdens in this regard.

Important points

We quoted the above lengthy text of *Sirāt Mustaqīm* so that it may serve as a complete benefit for the reader. But the actual purpose was to discuss only certain aspects of it which are as follows:

1. The Maulānā *rahimahullāh* spoke about the detailed books written by the *ʿulamā'* of the *tarīq* with regard to the different evil characteristics, their causes and their treatment. What is the meaning of his statement: "Despite the clarity of these books, they are insufficient."?
2. After studying these lengthy books, some people were overtaken by despondency. What was the reason for it?
3. There were those who felt they were not in need of reformation and felt that they only have good characteristics; they are totally devoid of evil characteristics. To what extent

are their views correct? And why do they have such views?

I will now explain each point in detail. Read it attentively.

1. What is the meaning of Hadrat Maulānā Dehlawī's *rahimahullāh* statement as quoted in point number one above?

I myself was quite troubled by the meaning of Hadrat Dehlawī's *rahimahullāh* statement and to its actual import. Because, for example, I saw an erudite scholar like Imām Ghazzālī *rahimahullāh* going into great details on the subject of character in his *Ihyā' 'Ulūm*, and many of Allāh's servants benefited from it. So I did not understand Hadrat Dehlawī's *rahimahullāh* statement with regard to such thoroughly researched books when he said: "They were insufficient."

I thought to myself that if a phenomenal service like Imām Ghazzālī's *rahimahullāh* was insufficient, what is there which could be beneficial? Moreover, the Maulānā himself not only acknowledges its clarity, but its intense clarity. But for something to be insufficient – this I did not understand initially. But – *al-hamdulillāh* – an explanation came to my mind later on. If you listen to it, you will also agree that this is what the Maulānā *rahimahullāh* really meant.

The Maulānā did not say that these books are useless or incorrect. Rather, what he said that despite their clarity, they are insufficient. This means: one is to have knowledge of something, and the other is to be characterized with that thing. So

even if a person were to memorize the entire *Ihyā' al-ʿUlūm*, of what benefit will it be to him? The most is that he will have knowledge of the principles surrounding the evils of the self. But mere knowledge of these principles are not sufficient for the reformation of his self. Reformation will only be realized when a person identifies an evil characteristic and acknowledges that it is found within him. So, as regards the signs and causes of that evil, it will become very clear to him that they are found in him. Only when he learns this, will he be able to undertake a process of reformation. As for the evils and harms of the different evil characteristics, these are known to everyone. In fact, I will go one step further and say that let alone Muslims, even non-Muslims know that pride is an evil thing, anger is not good, hypocrisy is a terrible trait, breaking a promise is reprehensible, and that we should not wrong anyone, and so on, and so on.

This is what I think the Maulānā *rahimahullāh* is saying. That senior experts such as Imām Ghazzālī *rahimahullāh* wrote detailed books on the evil characteristics, and they are so clear that the idiom "he removed the hair from the skin" applies to it, but all they can do is provide knowledge of the evil characteristics, they are not sufficient enough to cause a person to abstain from them and to embellish his self with virtues. No matter how clear and lucid these books may be in the knowledge which they impart, for a person to be characterized with good characteristics and emptied of evil ones, there is a need for something more. Hadrat Maulānā Dehlawī *rahimahullāh* explains this himself:

> It is therefore important for people of our times to engage in *ashghāl* (devotional practices) and *murāqabāt* (meditations) for the removal of these evil characteristics just as they are resorted to in order to acquire the true recognition of Allāh *taʿālā*. In other words, they must enquire about the presence of these evils within their selves through pondering and reflecting (and then follow a course for their removal).

Together with keeping a check on evil characteristics, I consider it essential for a person to refer to a *shaykh-e-kāmil* (qualified spiritual mentor) because a *murīd* cannot fathom many matters and difficult stations merely through his intelligence, understanding, and through the study of books. This is neither the job of a book nor within a *murīd's* capability – unless Allāh *taʿālā* wills it for certain people. If a book alone was sufficient, there can be no greater book than the Book of Allāh *taʿālā*; and the Prophets *ʿalayhimus salām* would not have been commissioned. In the same vein, medical journals which describe the nature of an illness, its signs and its treatment in great detail, would have been sufficient for a sick person. He would have had no need to consult a doctor.

The following is said with regard to the Qur'ān:

جميع العلم في القرآن لكن – تقاصرت عنه أفهام الرجال

All sciences are found in the Qur'ān, but the intellects of men are unable to fathom and understand them.

In order for us to practise on the Qur'ān, we are in need of Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* and his Sunnah. In the same way, any book on *tasawwuf*, no matter how clear it may be, will not suffice for the removal of spiritual ailments and the characterization of virtues. Rather, together with the book, the need for a *shaykh-e-kāmil* remains. Only knowledge is acquired through books, and knowledge of something does not necessarily mean that the person is characterized by it and practises on it.

I feel like relating an incident concerning Bū ʿAlī Sīnā at this point. It is a very clear proof for our claim:

Shaykh Bū ʿAlī Sīnā went to meet a *buzurg*. When he was about to leave after meeting him, he left behind one of his associates and instructed him thus: "After I depart, you must listen carefully to whatever the *buzurg* says about me, and then convey it to me." The *buzurg* did not say anything, so Shaykh Bū ʿAlī Sīnā wrote to his associate saying: "You yourself must ask the *buzurg* about me, and say: 'What do you think of Bū ʿAlī Sīnā?' You must then write to me, informing me of what he said."

Subsequently, he presented himself before the *buzurg* one day and asked: "What do you think of Bū ʿAlī Sīnā?" He replied: "Bū ʿAlī does not have any good character." The associate wrote to Bū ʿAlī and

conveyed to him what the *buzurg* said. On hearing this, Bū ʿAlī Sīnā wrote a detailed book on the subject of character, and sent it to the *buzurg* via his associate. The *buzurg* understood that Bū ʿAlī was actually giving a reply to his statement, so he said: "I did not say he does not know good character, I said he does not have good character."

You see how the *buzurg* replied to Bū ʿAlī Sīnā's entire book in just two statements? We learn from this that despite his erudition in knowledge, Bū ʿAlī Sīnā did not know the difference between knowledge and application of knowledge. Bū ʿAlī Sīnā wanted to prove his knowledge through this book, while the *buzurg* disproved his practise on that knowledge.

It becomes very clear from this incident that knowledge of something is one thing, and to be characterized by it is something else. It is highly possible for a person to know something but not be characterized by it.

The statement of H̲ad̲rat Maulānā Muh̲ammad Ismāʿīl Shahīd Dehlawī *rah̲imahullāh* also becomes clear now. That although the erudite *ʿulamā'* wrote detailed and clear books on the subject of evil characteristics, they are not sufficient for a person's reformation. Rather, the companionship of a *shaykh-e-kāmil* and his tutorship is still needed. You must have realized from this explanation that this is exactly what Maulānā Shahīd *rah̲imahullāh* meant.

2. The second point which Maulānā Shahīd *rah̲imahullāh* had made was that people of little

courage became despondent when they saw these long and detailed books on the subject of rectification of character. They lost hope and felt that these [people of the past] were different people who achieved all these things; we cannot accomplish the same. This is why such people lost hope about their own reformation. Undoubtedly, there are many who experienced this, and were affected by it – as stated by the Maulānā *ra<u>h</u>imahullāh*.

I myself know with certainty some individuals who were asked by their shaykh to study the *Arbaʿīn*,[1] and after studying it, they fled from Sufism. But what was the real reason for it? This I will explain further on.

3. The third point which Maulānā Shahīd Dehlawī *ra<u>h</u>imahullāh* had made was that there were some people who thought that they did not have any evil characteristics, were endowed with virtuous characteristics, and therefore saw no need for reformation. Whereas they neither possessed the good characteristics nor were they devoid of the evil ones. In fact, this deception caused them to

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[1] This book is written by Imām Ghazzālī *ra<u>h</u>imahullāh*. Its Urdu translation was done by Maulānā ʿĀshiq Ilāhī Meerutī *ra<u>h</u>imahullāh* by the title, *Tablīgh-e-Dīn*. <u>H</u>a<u>d</u>rat <u>H</u>akīmul Ummat Maulānā Ashraf ʿAlī Thānwī *ra<u>h</u>imahullāh* used to instruct his associates to study this book.
I [Mu<u>h</u>ammad Qamaruz Zamān] have compiled the summary of the "evil characteristics" mentioned in this book, and included it in the book titled, *Shifā'-e-Dil*, which has been compiled by Maulwī Ma<u>h</u>būb A<u>h</u>mad Qamaruz Zamān Nadwī.

remain completely dispossessed. We seek refuge in Allāh *taʿālā*.

This is what I would like to say about this group of people: First of all, it is no fault of those books [written on the subject of character] for these people to have such deceptive thinking. It is rather their own defective thinking and understanding. How did they, in contradiction to the clear texts of the Qur'ān and Hadīth, assume that they did not have any defective qualities and characteristics? Whereas Hadrat Yūsuf *ʿalayhis salām* who was a sinless Prophet says about his self:

وَمَآ اُبَرِّئُ نَفْسِيْ ۚ اِنَّ النَّفْسَ لَاَمَّارَةٌۢ بِالسُّوْءِ اِلَّا مَا رَحِمَ رَبِّيْ

I do not absolve my self; surely the self teaches evil except those upon whom my Sustainer has mercy.[1]

This clearly shows that the self teaches evil. As for the one who receives Allāh's grace and, by virtue of his striving, his *nafs* progresses to becoming *nafs-e-lawwāmah* and then *nafs-e-mutma'innah*,[2] then that is another matter. Allāh *taʿālā* says:

وَالَّذِيْنَ جَاهَدُوْا فِيْنَا لَنَهْدِيَنَّهُمْ سُبُلَنَا

Those who strive in Our cause, We shall most certainly guide them to Our paths.

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[1] Sūrah Yūsuf, 12: 53.

[2] There are three levels for the *nafs*: (1) *nafs-e-ammārah* (the self which teaches and prompts one towards evil), (2) *nafs-e-lawwāmah* (the reprimanding self), and (3) *nafs-e-mutma'innah* (the satisfied and tranquil self).

These people are really astray and not worthy of being addressed. It is better to leave them to their wishful thinking so that once the dust is cleared, they will realize their own folly. A poet says in this regard:

فسوف ترى إذا انكشف الغبار – أفرس تحت رجلك أم حمار

Once the dust is cleared, you will come to know whether there is a horse or a donkey beneath you.

I consider those who studied the books of the *'ulamā'* of *tasawwuf* and then concluded that they will not be able to tread this path to be a boon. This is because there is some *Dīn* in them, and this is why they believe they have faults and defects. Because they lack courage, they do not make the effort to tread the path. They are certainly desirous of treading it, and will tread it if it is made easy for them.

I would like to go into some details in this regard. Why did these two groups come into existence, and is it the fault of those *'ulamā'* who compiled those detailed books, or is it the groups' own fault? I think Maulānā Dehlawī *rahimahullāh* is absolutely correct in saying that one group became despondent and lost hope after reading these books. But I can say with evidence that the cause of this was neither those books nor their manner of explanation. Rather, it was of those who studied those books and took that effect from them. To disregard this point and attribute the despondency solely to the books is synonymous to disregarding something of your own accord and attributing the blame to your teacher.

Now listen to the actual reason, and why people are fleeing from the *ṯarīq*. The fact is that recognition of the *nafs* and its evil traits is no easy task, and rectifying it is no joke. Instead, rectifying the *nafs* is akin to chewing steel. Only the person whom Allāh *taʿālā* has inspired can step into this valley, and to him alone are the defects of the *nafs* exposed. Apart from this, people generally flee from this field. This is the only way to establish a genuine bond with Allāh *taʿālā*, and the first prerequisite for it is sincerity and Allāh's grace and kindness to the person. This is the way a servant will realize his faults. Once he acquires this realization, it becomes easy to rectify the *nafs* of its evil traits, and he is blessed with true recognition of Allāh *taʿālā* and affinity with Him. Imām Ghazzālī *ra<u>h</u>imahullāh* writes in this regard:

اعلم أن الله عز وجل إذا أراد بعبد خيرا أبصره بعيوب نفسه، فمن كانت بصيرته نافذة، لم تخف عليه عيوبه، فإذا عرف العيوب، أمكنه العلاج، ولكن أكثر الخلق جاهلون بعيوب أنفسهم، يرى أحدهم القذى في عين أخيه ولا يرى الجذع في عين نفسه.[1]

When Allāh taʿālā wills good for a person, he enables him to see the faults of his self. When a person's insight is fully open, his faults are not hidden from him. Once he identifies his faults, he is able to treat and rectify them. But the vast majority of people are ignorant of their own faults. They can see a tiny piece of straw in their brother's eye, but not a huge tree stump in their own eye.

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[1] إحياء العلوم، ج ٣، ص ٦٨.

This shows that people in every era disregarded rectification of their own selves and were prone to looking at the faults of others. The main reason for this is that a person is not aware of his own faults, so he will not even bother to rectify his self. May Allāh *taʿālā* inspire us all to identify our own faults. Āmīn.

We learn from this that the biggest reason for the absence of reformation of the *nafs* is ignorance with regard to its defects and shortcomings. As long as a person is ignorant of his faults and evils, how will he ever rectify and reform them? How will he come out of his deception, self-conceit and arrogance?[1]

In short, the people of the truth of every era directed the masses towards rectification of the *nafs*. But the treatment of spiritual maladies and the bitterness of striving in this regard make it difficult to bear all this. Only a person whom Allāh *taʿālā* has favoured, who considers his self to be his enemy, and is prepared to come onto the field to combat it will be able to achieve anything. If not, it will be a very difficult issue indeed. A poet rightly says:

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[1] Hadrat Muslihul Ummat *rahimahullāh* used to read this couplet regularly:

> "I was criticizing others, but no sooner I opened my eyes, I found my heart to be densely filled with faults and defects."

Hadrat Maulānā Muhammad Ahmad Sāhib Partābgharī *rahimahullāh* conveys the same theme as follows

> "The moment I opened my eyes, my own position and rank fell down before me."

> Only by drinking the blood of the heart and eating the liver will those who are madly in love with You, acquire the sustenance of attaining You.

Imām Ghazzālī *rahimahullāh* says with reference to the severity of this illness and the bitterness of its treatment:

وكما أنه لا بد من الإحتمال مرارة الدواء وشدة الصبر عن المشتهيات لعلاج الأبدان المريضة، فكذلك لا بد من احتمال مرارة المجاهدة والصبر لمداواة مرض القلب، بل أولى فإن مرض البدن يخلص منه بالموت، ومرض القلب والعياذ بالله تعالى مرض يدوم بعد الموت، أبد الآباد.[1]

Just as there is no alternative to bearing bitter medications and abstaining patiently from desirable things for the treatment of ailing bodies, there is no alternative to bearing the bitterness of striving and patience for the treatment of ailments of the heart [spiritual maladies]. In fact, the latter is more necessary because death is a recourse for escaping from physical ailments. As for the ailment of the heart – we seek refuge in Allāh taʿālā – it is an ailment which continues even after death, until eternity.

Look! He clearly states that, like physical treatment, there is a need for medication, abstention and precautions for the treatment and removal of evil traits of the heart. In fact, it is more important. Striving (*mujāhadah*) for the sake of spiritual treatment is like a very bitter pill. And

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[1] إحياء العلوم، ج ٣، ص ٦٥.

abstaining patiently from desirable things is similar to a sick person having to abstain from certain foods. It is clear, that in today's times, neither are people prepared for *mujāhadah*, nor do they exercise patience over desires of the self. If the medication and the precautions have both been abandoned, there is no limit to the deterioration of the illness. What rectification and reformation can be expected in such a situation? This is the reason for an absence of rectification in these times. The bitterness of this pill is the cause of worshippers of the *nafs* fleeing from the *ṯarīq*.

H̲ad̲rat Mus̲lih̲ul Ummat *rah̲imahullāh* adds that ignorance is another reason for people fleeing from rectification of the self. In other words, they do not approach it because they know nothing of its nature, importance and benefit. If one group, due to its cowardice, considers it to be very difficult and therefore flees from it; we would have still found a few courageous servants of Allāh *taʿālā* who would have had a genuine quest and would have been prepared to step into this dangerous and hazardous valley. Although there is a large group which is heedless of Allāh *taʿālā*, there will always be a group until the day of Resurrection, no matter how small, which will not be able to tolerate this situation which will be an embodiment of the following couplets:

> O heart! It is far better for you to drink the glass of red wine and become intoxicated, and obtain a following which is a hundredfold larger than Qārūn's

> without any wealth, riches, gold and treasures.
>
> Although seeking to meet Laylā could pose a threat to your life, the first prerequisite for it is that you will have to become Majnūn.

Ignorance: another reason for an absence of rectification and reformation

Hadrat Muslihul Ummat *rahimahullāh* continues:

I said that ignorance is a reason for an absence of rectification. I did not say this from my self. You must have gauged it from the words of Imām Ghazzālī *rahimahullāh* when he said:

> But the vast majority of people are ignorant of their own faults.

No matter how much of material progress people may have made at present, I consider this era to be very far behind as regards the *Dīn*. Or to put it in another way, just as mankind has progressed in every field, it has progressed in ignorance as well. This is especially so with regard to matters of *tasawwuf* – they are like strangers to it. Their *Dīnī* acumen and inner spiritual insight are virtually non-existent. This is why Imām Ghazzālī *rahimahullāh* said that people are so ignorant of their own faults that they can see a tiny straw in the eyes of others, but not a tree trunk in their own eyes. I ask you, are these the fruits of knowledge or the essential components of ignorance? Obviously, these are the evil fruits and results of ignorance.

The way to remove ignorance

Since ignorance is the cause for all these evils, we ought to know that the way to remove it is knowledge. And knowledge is either acquired from the company of the *ʿulamāʾ* or from the books of our pious elders. As for knowledge about good and bad character, this requires erudite *mashāʾikh* and pious personalities.

But nowadays there are not so many pious personalities in every place where people could benefit from their company, imbibe from them, and learn knowledge and character from them. Even if there are such pious personalities, it is difficult to recognize them because of the popular past time of rejecting them, lack of a desire in the people, and the absence of sincerity. So as long as a person cannot gain access to a *shaykh-e-kāmil* (qualified spiritual mentor), studying the writings of erudite *ʿulamāʾ*, the biographies of genuine *mashāʾikh*, stories from their lives, and their *malfūẕāt* (statements) has been laid down for the acquisition of knowledge.

Nevertheless, as I was saying, the actual reason for an absence of rectification today is ignorance about the way of *taṣawwuf*. And to remove this ignorance, we must either remain in the company of the pious personalities or study their writings.

Based on this need, it is my heartfelt desire to speak about each of the various evil characteristics. In this way, people will learn about them and it will become possible for them to practise. I had commenced this subject with the writings of Ḫaḏrat

Maulānā Ismā‘īl Shahīd Dehlawī *rahimahullāh* as a way of acquiring blessings. *Al-hamdulillāh*, you must have learnt a lot from the explanations which were provided above. I now commence with the actual objective. I will first categorize the different types of character, and then explain their meanings. Listen carefully.

Types of character (*akhlāq*)

The word *akhlāq* is the plural of *khuluq*. We are explaining the different types because through it, the meaning of *khuluq* will also be established. There are two types of *khuluq*: (1) *khuluq hasan*, and (2) *khuluq sayyi'*. We could rephrase these two terms and refer to them as *khuluq mahmūd* and *khuluq madhmūm* (praiseworthy and blameworthy character). *Khuluq* is an internal thing, and one of the attributes of the heart – separate from actions and words. External actions and words are subservient to it and subsidiaries of it. If *khuluq* is *hasan* (sound, good), it is a great achievement in a person. This is why praises for praiseworthy character, and disparagement of blameworthy character is mentioned in the Qur'ān and Hadīth on the basis of external actions. This means that the better a person's character, the greater he will be considered to be – both in this world and in the Hereafter. In other words, by the creation and by the Creator.

When we say that *khuluq* is an attribute of the heart, it does not mean that its effect is not on the external self. Rather, it certainly has an effect on the external self. Consequently, the one whose internal self is sound and good, his external self will

also be sound and good. The person who is internally depraved, the effect of it will be seen on the outside as well. The external actions and words which are sometimes referred to as *khuluq* are done so because they stem from an internal *khuluq*. If a person's external self is good, but the basis for it is not found in the internal self, in fact its opposite is found, then this is either hypocrisy or ostentation. It is possible for a person to have no good *khuluq* in his heart, but he portrays himself as an excellent and good person. This shows that the essential *khuluq* is found in the heart, and it is really an attribute of the heart.

Note: In his book, *Wasīyyatul Akhlāq*, Hadrat Muslihul Ummat *rahimahullāh* quotes a text from *Kanz al-ʿUmmāl* which states:

ونعني بالأخلاق ما هو من أعمال القلوب والأفعال ما هو من أعمال الجوارح

When we say akhlāq, we are referring to actions of the heart. And when we say afʿāl, we are referring to actions of the external body parts.

After the above categorization, listen to its definition as stated in *Manhaj al-ʿUmmāl*:

إعلم أن حسن الخلق هو معاملتك مع كل أحد بما يسره إلا فيما يخالف الشرع

Know that husn al-khuluq (good character) refers to your interaction with every person in a manner which pleases him, except in matters which are against the Sharīʿah (because it is not permissible to please someone while going against the commands of the Sharīʿah. This will not be good character, but evil character).

Hadrat Maulānā Rashīd Ahmad Gangohī *rahimahullāh* says:

الخلق معناه معاملة المخلوق حسب رضاء الخالق

Khuluq refers to interaction with the creation in a manner which pleases the Creation.

Hadrat Maulānā Rashīd Ahmad Gangohī *rahimahullāh* also provides the following definition:

الخلق هو المعاملة بالخالق والمخلوق حسبما يرضى به الخالق

Khuluq refers interaction with the Creator and the creation in a manner which pleases the Creator.

According to the above definition, *khuluq* will encompass the entire Sharīʿah, i.e. all the rights of Allāh *taʿālā* and all the rights of the creation.

As for the following words as mentioned in the definition of *Manhaj al-ʿUmmāl*:

إلا فيما يخالف الشرع

Except in matters which are against the Sharīʿah (this is not good character but evil character, because the pleasure of the creation should be disregarded).

I think the following Hadīth of *Shamā'il* is the basis for it:

عن عائشة رضي الله عنها قالت: ما ضرب رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم بيده شيئا قط إلا أن يجاهد في سبيل الله ولا ضرب خادما ولا امرأة.

Hadrat ʿĀ'ishah radiyallāhu ʿanhā said: Rasūlullāh sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam never ever hit anyone with his blessed hand unless when he was waging

jihād in Allāh's cause. He neither raised a hand against a servant nor a woman.

Note: He used his hands and swords when in jihād because this is what good character demanded at the time.

Shāmī defines the word *khuluq* as *ulfat* (love, affection, harmony). He says in "the Chapter on who is most eligible for *imāmat* (leading people in salāh)":

ثم الأحسن خُلُقًا بالضَّم، أي ألفة بالناس

Then the one whose character is the best. In other words, the one who has most love and affection for the people.

I say: In addition to all the above definitions, it also has the meaning of "mannerism and way". As stated by Hadrat ʿĀ'ishah *radiyallāhu ʿanhā*:

كان خلقه القرآن

Rasūlullāh's sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam character was the Qur'ān.

Here the word *khuluq* comes in the meaning of way. Hadrat Muslihud Dīn Shīrāzī *rahimahullāh* also says: "The purpose of sending the Qur'ān was to acquire good *sīrat* (way of living, mannerism), not to merely read the written sūrahs." This *sīrat* is actually a translation of *khuluq*, and you get both good *sīrat* and bad *sīrat*. This shows that the word *khuluq* is also applied to *sīrat*, irrespective of whether it is good character or evil character.

Let me now explain the meaning of *khuluq*. Since there are many things which can be referred to as *akhlāq*, the definition of each *khuluq* is also different, irrespective of whether they are praiseworthy or blameworthy. For example, humility, contentment, patience, acceptance, etc. These are all *khuluq h̲asan* (good character), and the definition of each one is different. Similarly, you get pride, vanity, jealousy, ostentation, anger, etc. These are all *khuluq sayyi'* (evil character), and their definitions too are different. It is therefore not easy to provide a comprehensive definition of *khuluq* which would incorporate all. However, I will, by the grace of Allāh *taʿālā* and the blessings of the companionship of our pious elders, provide a comprehensive definition. Listen to it carefully.

A comprehensive definition of *khuluq*

Khuluq h̲asan (good, sound character) refers to a characteristic which is good in itself. In other words, it is laid down specifically for goodness. This means that everyone considers it to be good. Since it is laid down specifically for good, everyone will consider it to be good. For example, a handsome person – everyone will consider him handsome. Or, a wrestler – everyone is pleased by his bravery. It is because of these qualities that people consider such a person to be good. This definition can apply in totality to all praiseworthy characteristics. Some scholars define good character as follows:

هو معاملتك مع كل أحد بما يسرّه

It refers to your interaction with every person in a manner which pleases him.

This definition supports what I am saying.

You can understand *khuluq sayyi’* (evil character) in the same vein. That is, it refers to a characteristic which is bad in itself. In other words, it is laid down specifically for badness. So if it is bad, any person who sees it will consider it to be bad. This is because there is a principle which says: an evil is considered evil. You will realize that this definition will apply to every evil characteristic, and can apply in totality to every blameworthy characteristic. In this way, we have provided a comprehensive definition of both good and evil character.

You can now conclude the following: Just as a praiseworthy characteristic or blameworthy characteristic is good or bad in itself, it is praiseworthy or blameworthy in its effect. In other words, a praiseworthy characteristic produces many good results. In the same way, a blameworthy characteristic produces many bad results. Thus, good characteristics produce good and beneficial effects, and bad characteristics produce bad and harmful effects. Now try to understand the following:

Humility is the basis for all praiseworthy characteristics. Pride is the basis for all blameworthy characteristics, and self-conceit is the basis for pride. The pious elders have written that self-conceit is the cause of pride. In other words, it is solely through self-conceit that pride comes to the fore. In short, humility holds the foremost position among the praiseworthy characteristics, and the remaining good characteristics are

subservient to it. And pride holds the prime position among the blameworthy characteristics, and the remaining evil characteristics are subservient to it. *Manhaj al-ʿUmmāl* states:

إعلم أن الأخلاق الحميدة كثيرة، وأصلها التواضع، والبواقي تدور عليه. والأخلاق الذميمة كثيرة، وأصلها التكبر، والبواقي تدور عليه.

You should know that praiseworthy characteristics are many, but their basis is humility. The remaining ones are subservient to it. The blameworthy characteristics are many, but their basis is pride. The remaining ones are subservient to it.

In his *Ihyā' al-ʿUlūm*, Imām Ghazzālī *rahimahullāh* has a section on destructive qualities. In it he speaks about the origins and causes of pride. He writes:

> You should know that pride is an internal characteristic, i.e. connected to the heart. The traits and actions displayed by a proud person are results and fruits of those internal traits. It would be appropriate to refer to it as arrogance, while pride be specifically set aside for that same internal characteristic whose essence is that a person considers himself to be great, and his value to be more than that of others. The root of this internal characteristic is nothing but self-conceit and vanity which develops within an arrogant person. When a person sets his gaze on his own perfection, his own knowledge, his own actions, or any of the

> other causes of self-conceit, he considers himself to be great, and displays his arrogance to others.[1]

I only needed to quote the above section for my purposes. However, the matters which Imām Ghazzālī *raḫimahullāh* discusses further on are also very beneficial. I am quoting them here to complete their benefit.

> Arrogance is an external matter, and there are three causes of it. One cause is found in the arrogant person himself, another in the person on whom arrogance is displayed, and another in a third "person" [different from these two]. The cause which is in the haughty person himself is known as self-conceit. The cause which is related to the one on whom haughtiness is displayed is known as malice and jealousy. The cause which is related to a third "person" is known as ostentation. In this way, there are four causes: (1) self-conceit, (2) malice, (3) jealousy, (4) ostentation.
>
> Anyway, we explained that self-conceit creates pride internally, which in turn creates haughtiness in a person's external actions, words and conditions.
>
> Malice also spurs a person to haughtiness, but there is no self-conceit in it. For example, a person who is

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[1] إحياء العلوم، ج ٣، ص ٣٥٨.

haughty towards another whom he considers to be equal to or above him. But he became angry with him over a certain issue, and this anger produced malice which caused hatred to become embedded in his heart. Consequently, his self refuses to behave with humility before the person even though it understands that it ought to be humble before him. We see many wretched people whose selves are not prepared to submit before a senior person. This is because they bear malice or hatred towards them. This is the very thing which causes them to reject anything which the person says, even if it is the truth; to be too haughty to accept his advice, and to endeavour to surpass him even if they know that they are not worthy of surpassing him. It also prompts them to abstain from seeking his pardon when they wrong him, or apologizing to him when they commit an excess against him. Furthermore, it causes them to refuse to ask him about a matter which they are ignorant about.

In the same way, envy necessitates abhorrence for the one who is envied even if the latter did not harm or hurt him in any way which could have led to anger and malice. This envy becomes a cause of rejecting the truth, it prevents the envier from accepting advice and seeking knowledge. Many an ignorant person was desirous of knowledge but still remained

in the evil of ignorance because they felt it below their dignity to consult an *ʿālim* of their town or to learn from a relative. The cause of this was envy and hatred. This causes the person to constantly turn away from him and behave haughtily towards him while fully knowing that he ought to be humble before him by virtue of his knowledge and merit. But his envy constantly prompts him to act haughtily towards him even though he believes internally that he is not better than the other.

Ostentation also urges a person towards the characteristics of haughty people. So much so, a person is prepared to debate with one whom he knows to be better than his own self. There is no acquaintance between the two, no envy and malice towards each other, yet it prevents the first person from accepting the truth from the other and he refuses to benefit from him out of fear that people will say that the other is greater than the first. So ostentation was the matter which urged him to all this. If the same person were to be in privacy with the other, he would not behave arrogantly towards him (because there is no place for ostentation here). As for the person who acts haughtily towards another because of self-conceit and envy, he will behave in the same way even when in privacy – where there is no third person.

A person may wrongly attribute himself to a noble lineage while fully knowing that he is lying in this matter. Despite this, he will vex his pride over those of lesser lineage, demand a more distinguished position in assemblies, and walk ahead on the pathways. At the same time, he is not prepared to be treated equally while he knows within himself that he is not eligible for these things. He does not have pride internally because he knows fully well that he is a liar and fabricator in his claims to noble lineage. But ostentation prompts him to actions of the haughty ones. The word "haughty" is by and large applied to the person who does all these things on account of internal pride, which is based on self-conceit, and which causes a person to look down on others with scorn. He is also referred to a haughty person because his actions are similar to those of a proud person. We beseech Allāh *taʿālā* to protect us from all these traps of the self. Āmīn. Allāh *taʿālā* knows best.[1]

Details with regard to pride

Look! From the detailed explanation of Imām Ghazzālī *rahimahullāh* we learnt what pride is, the difference between pride and haughtiness, the source of haughtiness and the different things which prompt a person to be haughty. After this

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[1] إحياء العلوم، ج ٣، ص ٣٥٨.

brief explanation, I would like to show you what the Qur’ān says about pride. Allāh *taʿālā* says:

إِنْ فِيْ صُدُوْرِهِمْ إِلَّا كِبْرٌ مَّا هُمْ بِبَالِغِيْهِ فَاسْتَعِذْ بِاللهِ إِنَّهُ هُوَ السَّمِيْعُ الْعَلِيْمُ

There is nothing but arrogance in their hearts. They will never be able to reach it. Seek, then, refuge in Allāh. Surely, He alone is all-hearing, all-seeing.[1]

In the above verse, pride is attributed to the heart. We learn from this that pride is essentially in the heart, and it is an internal evil trait. The words and actions of man which are displayed externally emanate from this internal pride, this is why we refer to it as haughtiness. The following is mentioned in the story of Satan:

أَبٰى وَاسْتَكْبَرَ وَكَانَ مِنَ الْكَافِرِيْنَ

He did not obey and displayed arrogance. And he was from the unbelievers.[2]

The commentators say that the word *abā* means “not to obey, to refuse to obey”. It was an action which stemmed from arrogance. His refusal was also a manifestation of his internal pride which displayed itself as an external action.

The same incident is related in different places in the Qur’ān, and some of Satan’s statements are also quoted. When Allāh *taʿālā* asked him the reason for his refusal to prostrate, he replied:

أَنَا خَيْرٌ مِّنْهُ خَلَقْتَنِيْ مِنْ نَّارٍ وَّخَلَقْتَهُ مِنْ طِيْنٍ

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[1] Sūrah al-Mu’min, 40: 56.
[2] Sūrah al-Baqarah, 2: 34.

I am better than he – You created me from fire whereas You created him from clay.[1]

In another place, Satan says:

أَأَسْجُدُ لِمَنْ خَلَقْتَ طِيْنًا

Should I prostrate before a person whom You created of clay?[2]

All the above shows that when there is pride in a person, many of his actions and statements will be in line with that pride. These external actions are also referred to as pride although pride is the cause of these actions and statements which is an internal factor found in the heart. As we stated above, pride is the basis for all evil characteristics. So you can understand from this that Satan's essential illness was this very same pride. The statement which Pharaoh made with regard to Hadrat Mūsā *ʿalayhis salām* is the same as what Satan had said with regard to Hadrat Ādam *ʿalayhis salām*. Allāh *taʿālā* quotes the following statement of Pharaoh which he made against Hadrat Mūsā *ʿalayhis salām*:

أَمْ أَنَا خَيْرٌ مِّنْ هٰذَا الَّذِيْ هُوَ مَهِيْنٌ وَّلَا يَكَادُ يُبِيْنُ

Am I not better than this person who has no honour, and who cannot even speak clearly?[3]

This verbal statement is the result of his internal pride. It was the internal pride which prompted him

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[1] Sūrah al-Aʿrāf, 7: 12.
[2] Sūrah Banī Isrāʾīl, 17: 61.
[3] Sūrah az-Zukhruf, 43: 52.

to say what he said. People of every era who are ignorant of knowledge of *Dīn* consider it below their dignity to submit before the *ʿulamā'* and *mashā'ikh*. This is a terrible and extremely dangerous condition because it deprives a person of *īmān*. Can there be a greater harm than this in pride?! We seek refuge in Allāh *taʿālā*.

The punishment for pride

The worst punishment for pride is disgrace and humiliation. A proud person is cursed by the Creator and the creation. Allāh's *taʿālā* gaze of affection is turned away from him. A poet says:

> Pride imprisoned ʿAzāzīl (Satan) in the prison of humiliation and curse.

Why should this not be the case, after all, a haughty person is opposing Allāh *taʿālā*. A H̱adīth states:

اَلْكِبْرِيَاءُ رِدَائِيْ

Pride is My sheet.

How, then, can it be permissible for a person to compete with and oppose Allāh *taʿālā*!?

The author of *Rūẖ al-Maʿānī* gives an excellent explanation to the story of Satan under the verse:

أَبٰى وَاسْتَكْبَرَ وَكَانَ مِنَ الْكَافِرِيْنَ

He did not obey and displayed arrogance. And he was from the unbelievers.[1]

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[1] Sūrah al-Baqarah, 2: 34.

My heart desires for the reader to also be able to read it; in fact, read it several times, and decide for himself if this is not a worthy explanation. Can any intelligent person remain haughty and arrogant after hearing this story? Can any clever person remain with the trait of pride? The author of *Rūh̲ al-Maʿānī* writes:

ثم الظاهر أن كفره كان عن جهل بأن استرد سبحانه وتعالى منه أعاره من العلم الذي كان مرتديا به حين كان طاؤس الملائكة وأظافير القضا، إذا حكت ادمت وقسى القدر إذا رمت اصمت. وكان سراج الوصل أزهر بيننا فهبت به ريح من البين فانطفى.

وقيل عن عناد حمله عليه حب الرياسة والإعجاب بما أوتي من النفاسة ولم يدر المسكين أنه لو امتثل ارتفع قدره وسما بين الملاء الأسمى فخره، ولكن إذا لم يكن عون من الله للفتى، فأول ما يجني عليه اجتهاده.

Outwardly it seems that Satan's unbelief was prompted by his ignorance. Whatever knowledge Allāh taʿālā bestowed him with and with which he covered himself when he was living among the angels was taken away from him. When the nails of destiny are caused to fall, they injure a person. And when the quiver of fate starts shooting arrows, it renders a person deaf. It is as though Satan was saying [by his actions]: The lamp of connection was glowing between us when suddenly the winds of separation blew and the lamp was extinguished.

According to one opinion, his obstinacy was the cause of his unbelief. The fame and honour which he enjoyed prompted him to become ostentatious and egotistic. The poor fellow did not realize even this much that had he carried out Allāh's taʿālā order, his

value would have increased even more, and his lofty position would have elevated more among the highest angels. But the fact is that if Allāh's taʿālā help is not with a person, his self-opinions are the first things which cause him harm.

He says further on:

وكم أرقت هذه القصة جفونا وأرقت من العيون عيونا، فإن إبليس كان مدة في دلال طاعته يختال في رداء مرافقة ثم صار إلى ما ترى وأجرى ما به القلم جرى...وكنا وليلى في صعود من الهوى فلما توافيننا ثبت وزلت.[1]

We do not know how many eyes this story caused to lose sleep and how many fountains of tears it caused to flow because Satan was deluded by his obedience for some time, and he was boasting in the sheet of his connection with Allāh taʿālā. But then you know fully well what happened to him after that. Whatever fate had recorded for him was now realized…Laylā and I were climbing the mountain of love, but the moment we met, I remained firm and she slipped and fell.

Did you see? This is what I meant when I said that the story of Satan is no ordinary story. It is the first story which Allāh *taʿālā* relates in the Qur'ān. There is much guidance in it and many servants of Allāh *taʿālā* were guided by it. As stated by the author of *Rūh al-Maʿānī*: "We do not know how many eyes this story caused to lose sleep and how many fountains of tears it caused to flow."

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[1] روح المعاني، ج ١، ص ١٣١.

The need to understand the Qur'ān

But this was only until such time when the Qur'ān was read and studied with understanding. We also read these verses but they do not cause the slightest movement in our hearts. Whereas this one story is sufficient to completely uproot evils such as pride and haughtiness from our hearts. I read in a book that even now, when Satan occasionally recalls his previous situation, his stay in Paradise, its bounties, the joy of attachment with Allāh *ta'ālā*, etc. he becomes like a madman, pulls his hair, pours sand on his head, and thinks to himself: "O how sorrowful! What I was and what I have been reduced to!? I enjoyed a lofty position of proximity, and I am now in the pits of separation and repulsion."

It is true; when a bounty is snatched away from a person and he recalls his first situation, he feels very distressed and becomes very grieved. His distress and grief cannot be gauged others. The same applies to *tasawwuf*: a person is conferred with a certain condition, but he does not value and appreciate it. So when it is snatched away from him, he is left astounded and confused. We must seek protection against such a situation and condition.

A few couplets liked by Hadrat Hakīmul Ummat *rahimahullāh*

Hadrat Maulānā Thānwī *rahimahullāh* used to occasionally read the poem of Khāqānī which deals with the story of Satan. Those who were present would thoroughly enjoy Hadrat's rendition and they

would go into an ecstasy. We also consider it permissible to render and listen to such poetry. Khāqānī says:

> Satan used to say: I had engaged in abundant obedience of Allāh *taʿālā* and He was closer to me than my heart and soul. Ādam was created from soil while Allāh *taʿālā* created me from light. I used to consider myself to be His close friend. But the fact is that Hadrat Ādam *ʿalayhis salām* was His beloved. Unfortunately, it was recorded in the Preserved Tablet (*Lauh-e-Mahfūz*) that someone will be accursed. I considered everyone else to be that someone and never thought it will be me. Allāh *taʿālā* willed me to be the accursed one, and so, He made me such. As for the story of Ādam, it was just an excuse.

He says in conclusion:

> O Khāqānī! Don't ever rely on your obedience because Satan's story was related to the people of the world so that they may take a lesson from it.

Glory to Allāh! Look at the beautiful way in which he conveyed this theme. I now ask you: Are these Qur'ānic teachings and instructions which are contained in the midst of stories not enough for our reformation? Do they not have any effect on the heart? Is there no impact in them? Why, then, do people not explain these things for the sake of reformation and rectification? I think this was the

sole means of rectification, but ever since we abandoned it, deviation spread; and despite the many means for guidance, we cannot see guidance anywhere.

Note: It is most unfortunate: Many of those who are diligent and regular with salāh and fasting, refuse to listen to Qur'ānic teachings, let alone reading them. In fact, they want this mind set [of total disregard for Qur'ānic teachings] to become common everywhere. O how unfortunate!

After providing the definition of pride and explaining its nature, Hadrat Muslihul Ummat *rahimahullāh* writes about its treatment and cure as follows:

The treatment for pride

I have been speaking about the evil characteristic of pride. Consequently, I am receiving many letters from seekers (*tālibīn* – those treading the path of *tasawwuf*) who are saying that they have the illness of pride in them. I gauge from this that this illness has become quite common among the Muslims as well. I have witnessed with my own eyes – son vexing pride to his father, student to his teacher, and the subjects to their king. We can conclude from this that they are not conscious of the despicability and repugnance of pride, they are not bothered by its consequences, and do not fear its harms. This is why they have no concern whatsoever about safeguarding themselves from it. If they were to become conscious of its harms, it (consciousness of its harms) will remove them from pride. Obviously, if a person's temperament is

already corrupt, then this is another matter. Hadrat Maulānā Yaʿqūb Sāhib *rahimahullāh*, who was a teacher of Hadrat Hakīmul Ummat *rahimahullāh*, writes to a *murīd* with a view to instilling abhorrence in him towards a certain evil trait. He writes:

> If at the exact time of eating a very appealing, fragrant and most delicious dish, you were convinced that it has been mixed with some impurity, it will not be surprising if you vomit whatever you had eaten and drank, and the attractiveness, fragrance and deliciousness of the food will not be able to stop you from this. Yes, if a greedy and ill-natured person were to see just one reason for desiring a thing, then no matter how many abnormal elements he experiences, they will not make any difference to his desire and quest. *Inshā Allāh*, this what I wrote to you will remove the abhorrent element from your thoughts."[1]

I say: The same applies to all evil characteristics. When Allāh *taʿālā* and Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* have spoken against them, we must conclude that they contain a poison, and committing them will be destructive and fatal. Now the person whose *īmān* is strongly founded and he has full conviction in Allāh *taʿālā* and Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* in his heart, his *īmān* alone will cause him to detest these characteristics.

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[1] *Maktūbāt Yaʿqūbīyyah.*

I consider awareness of the warnings contained in the Qur’ān and H̲adīth to be sufficient for the removal of this evil characteristic. Read them with your heart, ponder over them with honesty and sincerity, and *inshā Allāh*, this illness will come out of your system.

A display of pride by *‘ulamā’* is objectionable

There are times when we see men of knowledge also characterized by these evil traits. This could lead to the confusion that if knowledge alone was enough, why would these scholars have these traits? We ought to understand that this is another level of this illness, and its treatment too will be different. We will first quote this objection and its causes from *Ih̲yā’ al-‘Ulūm*, and then, through the blessings of these very same personalities and the statements of our elders, we will provide an answer and a treatment.

فإن قلت فما بال بعض الناس يزداد بالعلم كبرا وأمنا، فاعلم أن لذلك سببين، أحدهما أن يكون اشتغاله بما يسمى علما وليس علما حقيقيا، وإنما العلم الحقيقي ما يعرف به العبد ربه ونفسه وخطر أمره في لقاء الله والحجاب منه، وهذا يورث الخشية والتواضع دون الكبر والأمن. قال الله تعالى: إنما يخشى الله من عباده العلماء. فأما ما وراء ذلك كعلم الطب والحساب واللغة والشعر والنحو وفصل الخصومات وطرق المجادلات، فإذا تجرد الإنسان لها حتى امتلأ منها امتلأ بها كبرا ونفاقا، وهذا بأن يسمى صناعات أولى من أن يسمى علوما، بل العلم هو معرفة العبودية والربوبية وطريق العبادة، وهذا يورث التواضع غالبا.

السبب الثاني أن يخوض العبد في العلم وهو خبيث الدخلة ردئ النفس سيئ الأخلاق، فإنه لم يشتغل أولا بتهذيب نفسه وتزكية قلبه بأنواع المجاهدات ولم يرض نفسه في عبادة ربه فبقي خبيث الجوهر، فإذا خاض في العلم أي علم كان، صادف العلم من قلبه منزلا خبيثا فلم يطب ثمره ولم يظهر في الخير أثره وقد ضرب وهب لهذا مثلا، فقال العلم كالغيث ينزل من السماءحلوا صافيا فتشربه الأشجار بعروقها فتحوله على قدر طعومها فيزداد المر مرارة والحلو حلاوة، فكذلك العلم يحفظه الرجال فتحوله على قدر (هممها) واهوائها فتزيد المتكبر كبرا والمتواضع تواضعا، وهذا لأن من كانت همته الكبر وهو جاهل، فإذا حفظ العلم وجد ما يتكبر به، فازداد كبرا، وإذا كان الرجل خائفا مع علمه فازداد علما، علم أن الحجة قد تأكدت عليه فيزداد خوفا وإشفاقا وذلا وتواضعا، فالعلم من أعظم ما يتكبر به.[1]

If you were to say: "How is it that the more knowledge some people acquire, the more proud they become, and the more they consider themselves safe from the grasp of Allāh taʿālā?" You should understand that there are two reasons for this. <u>The first reason</u> is that these people are occupied in things which are commonly known as knowledge but are not really such. Genuine knowledge is when a person recognizes his self and recognizes his Sustainer. He perceives some trepidation with regard to meeting Allāh taʿālā even when He is veiled from him. This perception creates fear and humility in the person; not pride and smugness. Allāh taʿālā says in this regard: "From His servants, it is only the ʿulamā' who fear Allāh."

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[1] إحياء علوم الدين، ج ٣، ص ٣٥٣.

Anything apart from this, such as medicine, accounting, language, poetry, grammar, debating abilities, different ways of argumentation, etc. – if a person devotes himself to them to the extent of filling himself with them, he will be filling himself with pride and hypocrisy. It would be more appropriate to refer to them as arts instead of sciences. True knowledge means recognition of servitude and divinity, and knowing the manner of worshipping Allāh taʿālā. This produces humility in most cases.

The second reason *is that a person may immerse himself in acquiring knowledge but he is internally depraved, ill-tempered and of evil traits. He did not start off by culturing his self and purifying his heart through the different forms of striving (mujāhadah), and his self is not yet ready to worship Allāh taʿālā. So this person remains internally and essentially depraved. Now when he commences acquiring knowledge – no matter what knowledge it is – it finds a depraved and corrupt place in his heart. Consequently, its fruits are not good, and no good effects manifest themselves. Wahb rahimahullāh explains this with an example. He says: Knowledge is like a sweet and pure rain which descends from the sky. Trees absorb this rain water through their roots, and each tree converts it according to its own personal taste. Bitter trees will make it more bitter, sweet trees will make it sweeter. The same applies to knowledge. People acquire it and convert it according to their desires and wishes. A proud person becomes more proud, and a humble person becomes more humble. This is because the person who has the element of pride and is an ignoramus at the same time, then when he acquires knowledge he*

finds something with which he can display his pride. So this increases his pride. On the other hand, if a knowledgeable person is fearful of Allāh taʿālā and acquires more knowledge, he will realize that Allāh's evidence against him has increased. This will cause him to become more fearful, more frightened, more submissive and more humble. So genuine knowledge can never cause a person to become proud.

The first reason which Hadrat Imām Ghazzālī *rahimahullāh* gave for this illness is both excellent and most obvious. That is, knowledge which causes pride cannot be termed knowledge in the true sense of the word because the real effect of knowledge is submission and humility; not pride and heedlessness.

I would like to speak about the second reason given by Imām Ghazzālī *rahimahullāh*. Knowledge of *Dīn* is nevertheless good and nothing but good. How can it be a means or cause of any evil? I feel that the pride which we see in some scholars is not based on knowledge but on ignorance. What I mean is that their knowledge is still defective, and the portion of knowledge which they have not acquired as yet is the real cause of that evil trait [pride]; not the portion of knowledge which they already acquired.

Let me explain this through an example. You have two branches, one is filled with fruit, the other is half filled with fruit. Obviously, the one which is fully laden with fruit will bend more [to the ground] then the one which is half laden. The half laden branch will be more upright. You will not say that it is upright because of the fruit which is on it, but

because of the lack of fruit. In other words, its half-emptiness has caused it to remain upright. Had it been fully laden like the first branch, it would also be more bent towards the ground.

In the same way, when you see pride in an *ʿālim*, the cause of it is not knowledge. Knowledge has already served its purpose of giving him a lofty position. Had he not studied, he would have been in a worse condition. However, the evil trait which is still in him is because his knowledge is not perfect as yet; it is still defective. Thus, the cause of his pride and arrogance is the lack and defectiveness of knowledge.

The gist of this answer is close to what Imām Ghazzālī *rahimahullāh* explained under his discussion on "the first reason". The difference is that he differentiated it between superficial and genuine knowledge, while I am labelling it as perfect and defective knowledge.

Whether it is pride or any other evil trait, one level of it is that it has not yet embedded itself fully in the person. In such a case, a slight attention to it, e.g. by studying and listening to the Qur'ān and Hadīth, will create in him the thought of rectifying his self, and he will be able to achieve this easily.

But another level is when the joy of the ailment has embedded itself totally in the self and its sweetness establishes itself in the depths of the person's heart. In fact, some illnesses become so embedded that they become the nourishment for the self, causing it to become inebriated in its quest. In such a case, its treatment becomes a bit difficult. I am

quoting the words of H̲ad̲rat Maulānā Muh̲ammad Ismāʿīl Shahīd *rah̲imahullāh* in this regard. From this we will realize that there are certainly some ailments which become firmly embedded in the heart. He says:

> All spiritual physicians unanimously agree that it is an essential responsibility of those treading the path [of *tas̲awwuf*] to fulfil the rights of the *nafs*. Yes, they must save it from the desires of the *nafs* because this is harmful. This is especially so with regard to those desires which have embedded their selves in the heart, whose sweetness has settled in its depths, and in whose quest the *nafs* is inebriated and fully occupied.[1]

We had quoted a statement of H̲ad̲rat Maulānā Yaʿqūb S̲āh̲ib *rah̲imahullāh* wherein he had created an abhorrence for an evil trait in order to remove it from the heart of a *sālik* (one treading the path of *tas̲awwuf*). He said in conclusion:

> *Inshā Allāh*, this what I wrote to you will remove the abhorrent element from your thoughts.

H̲ad̲rat Maulānā Yaʿqūb S̲āh̲ib *rah̲imahullāh* writes further:

> If my thoughts are not beneficial to you, and the deeply-embedded desire does not come out – especially seeing that there is

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[1] *S̲irāt̲-e-Mustaqīm.*

> trembling from our side – then this task is undoubtedly a difficult one.[1]

It becomes clear from the statements of these elders that there are times when an evil trait becomes fully and firmly embedded in the heart, making it difficult to remove.

Treatment for firmly-embedded evil traits

However, these personalities did not provide any treatment for them. I will now present the treatment through their blessings and in the light of their writings. But first, you must understand one point which I had mentioned at the beginning as well. That is, one is pride which is an evil quality of the heart. The other is haughtiness or arrogance, and this refers to the statements and external actions which stem from this internal pride. From these two, it is easier for a person to give up haughtiness/arrogance because they are actions which are within his choice. So in order to rectify himself from haughtiness, all he has to do is give up the statements and actions which smack of haughtiness.

As for pride itself, no matter how little it may be, e.g. an ignorant person vexes pride over a knowledgeable person. When there is an *ʿālim-e-Dīn* anywhere, it is inevitable for him to acquire some position and authority because of the respect and honour which people accord to him. On seeing this, some ignorant people develop pride in their hearts, and are therefore not prepared to listen to and obey

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[1] *Maktūbāt Yaʿqūbīyyah.*

the *ʿālim*. They are not pleased by his seniority and position. Such a person must abandon his proud actions and statements immediately. In doing this, his internal pride will wane and eventually disappear completely.

If pride is of a higher level, as in the case where an *ʿālim* displays towards an *ʿālim* who is more senior than him, this causes him to vex pride against him, to be obstinate with him, and to reject him totally. The treatment for this is the same; he must abandon his proud actions and statements which are stemming from his internal pride. This will certainly weaken his internal pride.

As for internal pride or pride of the heart which embeds itself firmly in the heart, this cannot be removed easily. Instead, it will need severe striving. This means that depending on the level and place of the illness, that is how and where it will have to be treated. If it is firmly embedded in the depths of the heart, the medication will have to reach there. Depending on the extent of desire which the self has for this illness, the opposite extent of abhorrence towards it will have to be instilled. Only then will it be rectified and reformed. It will not work if the illness is in the heart while the treatment is given somewhere outside, and in a very superficial manner. There will be no benefit in this. This also applies to physical ailments. If a person has a pain in his stomach, we will not apply any ointment on the surface of the stomach. Rather, he will have to swallow some sort of medication.

Similarly, when those who are involved in false love [love affairs] are castigated and criticized for it, it

does not have any effect on them because they say that their love for the beloved is in the depths of their heart, and the criticism of the critics cannot reach such depths. Let alone not being able to reach the depths of the heart, the criticism cannot even reach its surface. It merely hovers around the heart. How, then, can it have any effect? Mutanabbī says in this regard:

عذل العواذل حول قلبي التائه – وهوى الأحبة منه في سودائه

The criticism of the critics merely hovers around my trembling heart, while the love for the beloveds is in the deepest folds of my heart.

Treatment through abundant *dhikr*

Where there is darkness, we ought to replace it with light. Only then will there be any benefit. This light will reach through abundant *dhikr*, strict purity and following the Sunnah. This can be achieved by the *sālik* striving on his own, or a *shaykh-e-kāmil* directing his attention on him and removing him from that pit through his affection. This method of treatment is not restricted to any particular ailment. Rather, it is applicable to any evil trait which is old, which has firmly embedded itself in the heart, and its enjoyment has settled in the depths of the heart. Heedlessness is the biggest ailment to develop in a man's heart, and Satan implants it even further. Other ailments can be put to an end through *dhikr*. Maulānā Rūm *ra<u>h</u>imahullāh* says in this regard:

> The *dhikr* of Allāh *taʿālā* is pure. And by nature, purity removes filth wherever it reaches.
>
> When Allāh's pure name enters the mouth, neither does any filth remain, nor does the mouth remain as it had been previously.

However, heedlessness is an ailment which, at times, cannot be removed even with *dhikr*. We experience heedlessness at the very time when we are engaged in *dhikr*, whereas each is the opposite of the other [heedlessness and remembrance]. The point is that *dhikr* is only external and superficial, it is not internal, real and genuine. Whereas, just as the tongue was not a *dhākir* (one who engages in *dhikr*), it eventually becomes one through constant *dhikr*. In the same way, if effort is made to make the heart into a *dhākir*, it will also become one. Why should it not be so?

Nevertheless, whether it is heedlessness, pride or any other evil characteristic, if it becomes firmly embedded in the self, there is a need for intense striving and toiling. After engaging in abundant *dhikr*, light develops in the heart, the self becomes illuminated, and only then is it [the evil characteristic] combated.

The author of *Rū<u>h</u> al-Maʿānī* explains this theme in an excellent manner. The crux of it is that the self (*nafs*) becomes subservient to the heart gradually and slowly. When a person sincerely turns his attention to self-rectification, Allāh *taʿālā* gives him power over his *nafs*, it gains recognition, and it is

able to distinguish between sincerity and self-motivation. People with genuine sentiment are able to perceive this.

Note: Glory to Allāh! What beautiful and beneficial themes. They ought to be adopted by those treading the path of *tasawwuf*. I can say with certainty that they are evidence of Hadrat's *rahimahullāh* deep knowledge and expertise in matters related to the *tarīqah*. May Allāh *taʿālā* bestow us with genuine perception and the inspiration to rectify ourselves accordingly.

Al-hamdulillāh, the article of Hadrat Muslihul Ummat *rahimahullāh* is now complete. However, I feel I have to quote the initial section of *Tasfiyatul Qulūb Mulaqqab bihi Shifā'-e-Dil*,[1] on the subject of pride. In this way, this evil characteristic will become more clear. Imām Ghazzālī *rahimahullāh* writes under the heading, *Pride and arrogance*:

> Allāh *taʿālā* says: "What an evil abode for the arrogant ones." A Hadīth Qudsī states: "Pride is My sheet. I shall kill anyone who wants to partner Me in it."

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[1] This is a translation of *Tazkiyatun Nufūs*, and is titled *Shifā'-e-Dil*. It has been translated by Maulwī Mahbūb Nadwī. I quoted the section on evil characteristics from *Tablīgh-e-Dīn* which is a translation of *Arbaʿīn* written by Imām Ghazzālī *rahimahullāh*. May Allāh *taʿālā* make this book a means of benefit. Āmīn. (Muhammad Qamaruz Zamān)

The nature and effects of pride

Rasūlullāh *s̲allallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* said: "The person who has pride equal to a mustard seed in his heart shall not enter Paradise." Those who are humble, and interact with people in a humble and modest manner despite being people of authority and wealth are to be congratulated because lofty levels are in store for them. For them is honour in this world and in the Hereafter.

Haughtiness means that a person considers himself to be superior to others as regards certain noteworthy attributes. When a person thinks in this manner about himself, his *nafs* obviously becomes inflated and the effects of it become manifest. For example, such a person will walk ahead of others, he will occupy the main or distinguished seat in an assembly, he will look at others with scorn, he will become angry at the person who does not greet him, he will be displeased if he is not respected, he will feel insulted if someone advises him, he will not submit to the truth even after learning it, he will look at the masses as though he is looking at donkeys. We seek refuge in Allāh *taʿālā* from all this.

Pride is a collection of many major ills. This is why it is an entire treasure for the Hell-fire.

1. Greatness is reserved for Allāh *taʿālā* alone, and He alone is worthy of it. How can this weak man who, let alone having no control over others, does not even have control over his own self, have the audacity to hanker after this divine attribute? A proud person is desiring partnership with Allāh

taʿālā despite his despicability and weakness, and wants to compete with Allāh *taʿālā* in this perfect attribute. He is therefore considered to be a fool of the highest degree and a most internally depraved person.

2. Pride causes a person to reject the truth, resulting the door of *Dīnī* fortune shutting on him. A proud person looks down at Allāh's creation with scorn. This is most disliked by Allāh *taʿālā*.

3. Pride prevents the *nafs* from acquiring any good characteristic. A proud person is deprived of humility. He is unable to repulse jealousy and anger. It is difficult for him to give up ostentation and adopt a lenient approach. He cannot desire the well being of his Muslim brother. In short, he is so intoxicated in his own greatness and importance, that it results in false thoughts, preventing him from accepting the advice of well-wishers, and being deprived from the rectification of his self.

I will now quote from the book *Shifā'-e-Dil* an explanation of vanity and self-conceit, both of which are branches of pride. It is a very enlightening discussion. We make *duʿā'* to Allāh *taʿālā* to enable us to practise. Āmīn.

The elders gained perfection by abandoning pride

The desire for position and distinctiveness, shame and pride are the things which prevent a person from acquiring perfection. These were the very characteristics which prevented the Quraysh unbelievers from embracing Islam and the Jewish scholars from following Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu*

ʿalayhi wa sallam. The same qualities prevented people of every era from humbling their selves before people of erudition. Eventually, they themselves were deprived of perfection. I had said the following in Allāhābād. Read it carefully.

After so many days [years] when I have become so old and it is not the time to acquire anything, I have come to understand that pride and shame are the things which prevent man acquiring proficiency and perfection in anything. Man is deprived of acquiring perfection because of these evil characteristics. They prevent him from submitting before anything. There are many erudite and proficient people, but no one benefits from them because they feel that if they were to go to them, they will lose their pride and shame.

I am specifically directing my address to the *ʿulamā'*. Rejection and pride are the reasons why the *ʿulamā'* and students are not acquiring anything today. This is what is preventing them. If they realize this and make an effort to abandon these traits, they can reach the level of perfection. Those who did reach this level did so by obliterating their selves, submitting before someone and putting an end to their pride and shame.

Man is deprived of knowledge because of pride and misplaced shame

The following is mentioned in *Bukhārī*:

وقال مجاهد: لا يتعلم العلم مستحي ولا مستكبر[1]

H̲ad̲rat Mujāhid rah̲imahullāh said: A person of misplaced shame and a proud person cannot acquire knowledge.

This is because pride would prevent a person from presenting his need, and knowledge cannot be acquired without this.

H̲ad̲rat Maulānā Mus̲lih̲ul Ummat Shāh Was̲īyyullāh S̲āh̲ib *rah̲imahullāh* used to say: Essentially, knowledge is not acquired because of pride. Shame and bashfulness in such circumstances is really because of pride.

H̲ad̲rat 'Umar *rad̲iyallāhu 'anhu* said:

تفقهوا قبل أن تسودوا

Acquire knowledge before you are placed in a position of leadership.

Generally when a person becomes a leader, he will not yield to anyone else because of pride. This will deprive him of knowledge. (Qamaruz Zamān)

H̲ad̲rat Maulānā Shabbīr Ah̲mad 'Uthmānī S̲āh̲ib *rah̲imahullāh* says in his explanation to the above statement of H̲ad̲rat 'Umar *rad̲iyallāhu 'anhu*:

The passive sense is used. It means that you must prepare for leadership. You must acquire understanding of *Dīn* for it so that you are eligible for leadership. If you were to become a leader without any knowledge, you will corrupt the people

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[1] صحيح البخاري، ج ١، ص ٢٤.

even more and you will not be able to set right their character and morals. On the other hand, the person who prepares himself from beforehand and develops capabilities within himself, he will become a source of goodness for the *ummah* when he becomes a leader. His good character, knowledge and wisdom will benefit people.

Another point in this statement of H͟ad͟rat ʿUmar *rad͟iyallāhu ʿanhu* is that it is easy for a person to seek knowledge before he becomes a leader. Bashfulness will not prevent him from acquiring knowledge at that time. But once he becomes senior, he will feel shy to humble himself as a student before another person. In this way, he will be deprived of knowledge.

After quoting the above statement of H͟ad͟rat ʿUmar *rad͟iyallāhu ʿanhu*, Imām Bukhārī *rah͟imahullāh* adds the words:

وبعد أن تسودوا

And after you are placed in a position of leadership.

In this way, he completed its meaning further by saying that you must acquire knowledge even after becoming a leader. In other words, do not think that now there is no need to acquire knowledge. The need is still there. Although the best time was before becoming leader, one can never be independent of knowledge.

He produces evidence for his statement "and after you are placed in a position of leadership" by saying that the S͟ah͟ābah *rad͟iyallāhu ʿanhum* used to acquire knowledge even in their old age.

In short, knowledge comes to the person who does not differentiate between young and old. Rather, he derives benefit from all, is never shy in this regard, and continues increasing his knowledge for the rest of his life.[1]

[1] درس بخاري، ج ۱، ص ۳٤۷.

VANITY AND SELF-CONCEIT

The despicability of self conceit

Allāh *taʿālā* says:

فَلَا تُزَكُّوْا أَنْفُسَكُمْ، هُوَ أَعْلَمُ بِمَنِ اتَّقٰى

So do not boast about your purity. He knows fully well he who is pious.[1]

It is the trait of the unbelievers to consider themselves and their deeds to be good. A Hadīth states that self-conceit destroys a person. This is because when a person considers himself to be pious, he becomes self-satisfied and smug, and deprives himself of bliss in the Hereafter. On one occasion, Hadrat Bishr ibn Mansūr performed a lengthy salāh. A person happened to observe him. Because he feared self-conceit, he completed his salāh and said: "Brother! Do not be deceived by what you saw. Satan worshipped Allāh *taʿālā* for 4 000 years, but we all know what eventually happened to him."

It does not behove a Muslim to consider his worship to be worship, and his obedience to be obedience. First of all, we do not even know whether it has been accepted or not, whereby we could say that it has been fulfilled or merely went to waste. Secondly, consideration is on the end result, and none of us knows the condition in which his life will end.

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[1] Sūrah an-Najm, 53: 32.

Note: This is certainly an excellent and beneficial treatment for self-conceit. Inspiration is from Allāh *taʿālā* alone. (Muhammad Qamaruz Zamān)

The difference between self-conceit and pride

Self-conceit is a branch of pride. The only difference is that a person's self (*nafs*) is made to feel great through other people. But in self-conceit, there is no need for others. To merely believe one's self to be perfect and consider one's self to be eligible for Allāh's *taʿālā* favours – i.e. not to consider His favours to be His grace, and to be fearless of their termination - is considered to be self-conceit and vanity.

Note: Glory to Allāh! What an excellent explanation of self-conceit. This ought to be borne in mind. In fact, we ought to remain very far from this evil trait because it appears to be worse than pride. (Muhammad Qamaruz Zamān)

The sign of self-conceit

If a person stoops to the level where he considers himself to be of high rank and position in Allāh's sight, then this is known as showing off. It results in a person expressing astonishment when his *duʿā's* are not accepted and his enemies are not punished. He wonders how come his *duʿā's* have not been accepted and his enemies have not been punished.

Remember this much: It is extremely foolish to be proud of one's worship and to consider one's self to be accepted in Allāh's court. However, if a person is happy over Allāh's favours, and fears they will be

snatched away from him, and understands that Allāh *taʿālā* bestowed them to him through His grace, He is the absolute master who can take them away whenever He wills, then this is not self-conceit. In self-conceit, the person forgets to attribute all favours and bounties to the true benefactor [Allāh *taʿālā*], and considers them to be his own.

Note: This clearly smacks of ingratitude. In fact, it is rejection of Allāh's favours, the prohibition of which is mentioned in the Qur'ān. O Allāh! Save us from this. (Muhammad Qamaruz Zamān)

The treatment for self-conceit and vanity

Self conceit is a result of real ignorance and ought to be treated. If a person is conceited over merits which are not within his control, e.g. strength, authority, beauty and wealth, he must think to himself: I had no influence whatsoever in the acquisition of these things. Why, then, should I be proud over them? It was solely due to Allāh's kindness and grace for having conferred them to me without being eligible for them. Moreover, all these merits are temporary. A little illness or weakness will cause them to depart. How, then, can I be conceited over someone else's unproductive gift?

If a person is vain over merits which are within his choice, e.g. knowledge, practice, abstinence, piety, worship and spiritual exercises, he must ponder over how he acquired these merits. Had Allāh *taʿālā* not bestowed him with intelligence, strength, courage, brains, eyesight, hands and legs, a will

and a purpose, he would not have acquired any of these merits. It was Allāh's decision to remove all obstacles in their acquisition. Without this, he could have achieved nothing.

It is an accepted fact that man has been given the choice to do good and bad. But this choice too has been given to him by Allāh *taʿālā*. The provision of all the means and then to give success are also gifts from Allāh *taʿālā*. In short, everything – from beginning to end – is in Allāh's control. How, then, can a person be conceited? If the key to treasures is in the hands of the king, and he opens the safe and gives over all the treasures to you, and you fill your pockets with the jewels which you like, and then you go around showing off that you have acquired so much of wealth, you will obviously be considered to be a fool. Although you gathered the jewels, the treasures belonged to the king, the key to the treasures were in the king's hand, he was kind to you by giving the key to you, and it was he who permitted you to enter the safe. Bearing in mind the fact that you had no choice in all these matters, how can you vex pride and be conceited over your actions?!

The treatment for voluntary self-conceit

It is most astonishing to note that intelligent, rational and educated people become like ignorant ones in this regard and are vain about their intellects. If they find an ignorant and stupid person to be wealthy, they are surprised and wonder how this could have happened. They think to themselves: "We are intelligent and sharp, yet we

are not wealthy. But this ignorant and naïve person is so wealthy!?"

At least ask yourself this: How come you have knowledge and intelligence, and the ignorant man is deprived of both? Are you going to consider one bounty to be the cause of another, and then show off your eligibility for it? If you were given knowledge and wealth, and an ignorant pauper was deprived of both, it would be more surprising because now one person has everything and the other has nothing. If a king were to give you a horse, and he gives a slave to another person, will you have the courage to say: "Hey, why did you give him a slave, when he does not even have a horse? And since I have a horse, I ought to be given the slave as well." To think in this way would be extremely foolish and shows real ignorance.

Intelligence demands you to be grateful for whatever Allāh *taʿālā* gave you and to think to yourself: Allāh *taʿālā* has been very kind for having showered me with bounties such as intelligence and knowledge without deserving them. Wealth is of no comparison before these bounties. Furthermore, He inspired me to be grateful and to worship Him, while He did not confer such inspiration to others. Whereas this deprivation is not as a punishment for some previous crime or sin.

If you think in this way, fear of Allāh *taʿālā* will develop and you will realize that the Being who gave you all this without being eligible for it, then you cannot complain if He snatches it away without any failure on your part. It may well be that this favour

is a deception and a respite, and could be a cause of destruction and punishment. Allāh *taʿālā* says:

> "We opened upon them the doors of everything, until when they revelled in all the things that were given to them, We seized them all of a sudden."[1]

When your mind is fully aware of all this, you will always remain fearful and submissive, and you will not be conceited over any bounty. In this way, you will save yourself easily from self-conceit.[2]

An observation with regard to self-conceit and ostentation

After explaining ostentation and self-conceit, I say: O man! Desist from your heedlessness or else there will be nothing but loss for you. The valley of ostentation and self-conceit is very arduous, difficult and harmful. It is the first valley which one has to traverse because it is the root and foundation of everything else. If you remain safe and secure in it, you will attain success and salvation. But if you follow the opposite direction, all your efforts will go in vain, they will be destroyed, your hopes will be dashed, and your life will be destroyed.

The intricate nature of ostentation and self-conceit

The intricacy of this issue lies in the fact that ostentation and self-conceit creep surreptitiously in

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[1] Sūrah al-Anʿām, 6: 44.

[2] تصفية القلوب شفاء دل، ص ٢٧٨.

one’s actions and deeds. None is aware of them except the person who is proficient, vigilant and wary in matters of his *Dīn*. An ignoramus, wretched, heedless and neglectful person does not even get wind of them.

I have heard from some *‘ulamā’* of Nīsāpūr relating that ‘Aṯā Sulamī *raḫimahullāh* made a beautiful and exclusive garment, and then proceeded to the market to sell it. A cloth merchant saw it and informed him of the different defects which are in it. ‘Aṯā Sulamī *raḫimahullāh* took it from him, sat in one corner and began crying profusely. The merchant regretted his action, asked him to accept his apology, and added to the price of the fabric. ‘Aṯā *raḫimahullāh* said to him: “I did not intend what you think. I did this work and put in all my effort in strengthening it, setting it right, and making it exclusive so that there remains no defect in it. But when I presented it before a person who knows about this type of work, he was able to identify faults in it which I was unaware of. What, then, will be the condition of our actions and different acts of worship when they will be presented tomorrow in the court of Allāh *ta‘ālā*? What defects and faults will come to the fore which we are unaware of today?”

A righteous person relates: It was the time of *seḫrī* (predawn) when I was sitting in my upstairs room and reading Sūrah Ṯā Hā. When I completed its recitation, I was overcome by a sort of slumber. I saw a person descending from the sky with a book in his hand. He brought the book to me and opened it before me. I saw Sūrah Ṯā Hā written in it, and

ten rewards recorded under each letter. But nothing was written under one particular letter. I said: "I take an oath in Allāh's name that I certainly read this letter. Why is the reward for it not recorded?" The person replied: "You certainly read it, and we also recorded its reward. But we heard a call from beneath the Throne instructing us to erase the reward. So we erased it." On hearing this, I cried a lot in my sleep and asked: "What is the reason for this?" I received the following reply: "While you were reading, a person passed by. On seeing him, you raised your voice slightly. This is why its reward has been erased." The reason for this is that ostentation and self-conceit are ailments which occur suddenly and wipe out the worship of seventy years.

A person invited Sufyān Thaurī *rahimahullāh* and his associates to his house. He then sent a message to his family to send a particular plate of dates which he had brought when he performed his second hajj, not the dates of his first hajj. Sufyān Thaurī *rahimahullāh* looked at the man and said: "This poor fellow has destroyed the rewards of both his hajj by this one statement."

Another reason for the despicability of ostentation and self-conceit is that if a little obedience and worship is safeguarded against them, they have immense value in Allāh's *taʿālā* sight. But if this ailment befalls a lot of obedience, there is no value whatsoever in it unless Allāh *taʿālā* makes up for it by His grace and kindness.

Hadrat ʿAlī *radiyallāhu ʿanhu* said: "There can be no shortage in any accepted action. How can there be

any shortage in an accepted action when even a small action is considered a lot on account of its acceptance?"

Nakhaʿī *rahimahullāh* was asked about certain deeds. He replied: "If they are accepted, their rewards are countless."

Wahb *rahimahullāh* said: "A person of the past worshipped Allāh *taʿālā* for seventy years by keeping fast one after the other without opening his fast for an entire week. He asked Allāh *taʿālā* for the fulfilment of a certain need but it was not fulfilled. He began reprimanding his self saying: 'It is because of the evil which is in you. Had there been any good in you, my need would have certainly been fulfilled.' Allāh *taʿālā* sent an angel saying: 'O man! This single moment which you spent in reprimanding your self is better and superior to all your past worship.'"

Imām Ghazzālī *rahimahullāh* said that a heedless and intelligent person ought to ponder and reflect over this: Is it not a defective and bad thing for a person to bear the pains and toiling of seventy years' worship, then ponders for a single moment which is then considered to be better than his seventy years of worship in the sight of Allāh *taʿālā*!? Is it not a great loss that you are able to do in a single moment a good act which you cannot do in seventy years, yet all this time has been abandoned!? Do you not ponder over this?

By Allāh, this is a serious loss, and to be heedless in this regard is a major failing. It is essential to safeguard it and preserve it against destructive

things. This is why the ardent worshippers who have been endowed with insight have been able to observe these intricate matters. This is why they paid particular attention to recognizing these mysteries, focussed on safeguarding them, and did not consider excessive deeds to be sufficient. They proclaimed that the virtue in deeds lies in their purity from defects. There is no benefit in abundance [quantity]. They said: A single jewel is better than a thousand broken pieces of earthenware. Those whose knowledge is limited and have no understanding of these matters are unmindful of them and have no knowledge whatsoever of the ailments of the hearts. They engage in excessive *rukūʿ* and *sajdah* (bowing and prostrating postures of s̱alāh) and abstain from eating and drinking, and are deceived by numbers and quantities. But they did not think about the innumerable benefits in purity of actions and deeds. What is the use of a large number of walnuts which are empty of the core? If the foundation of a building is not strong, it is futile to build lofty roofs. In short, it is only the *ʿulamā'* and people of *kashf* (exposition) who can fathom these things. Inspiration is from Allāh *taʿālā* alone.

JEALOUSY

The nature of jealousy

Jealousy is defined as follows: "To seethe at seeing another's freedom, prosperity or comfort; and to desire the disappearance of that bounty from him." Jealousy is *ḏarām*. Allāh *taʿālā* says: "A person who is envious of a bounty which I showered on any servant of Mine is showing disapproval of My distribution which I bestowed on My servants." Rasūlullāh *ṯallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* said: "Jealousy burns good deeds just as fire burns dry firewood." However, jealousy is permissible against a person who has the bounties of Allāh *taʿālā* but is spending them in wrong and disobedience. For example, a person is wealthy but is wasting his wealth in consuming alcohol and committing adultery. So to desire the snatching away of such a person's wealth is not impermissible. Rather, it is a desire for an end to his immorality and disobedience. An indication that this is in fact the case is that if the person gives up the sin, you no longer desire the snatching away of the bounties which he has.

Jealousy generally stems from arrogance and deception, or enmity and internal depravity. The person is unnecessarily miserly with Allāh's *taʿālā* bounties, and just as he does not give to anyone, he wants Allāh *taʿālā* not to give to anyone as well.

***Ghibṯah* is permissible**

If you desire a bounty which is enjoyed by another without wanting it to be taken away from him, then this is known as *ghibṯah* which is permissible in the

Sharīʿah. This is because you are not desiring the snatching away of a bounty from another, rather the acquisition of the like of what he has. There is nothing wrong in this.

A rational treatment for jealousy

The rational treatment is that the envier must realize that his jealousy is causing him harm, while no harm whatsoever to the one whom he envies. In fact, he is benefiting more in the sense that he is receiving the good deeds of the envier for free. On the other hand, the envier is causing harm to his *Dīnī* life and his material life.

The damage to his *Dīn* is that his good deeds are going to waste, coming to an end, and he is becoming a target of Allāh's *taʿālā* wrath. This is because he is acting miserly with the vast treasures of Allāh's *taʿālā* bounties, and does not want others to enjoy them.

The worldly harm is that the envier is always in grief and sorrow. He is always seething with thoughts of a particular person being struck by disgrace and bankruptcy. The person who is envied is actually overjoyed because the one who wanted to cause him sorrow is drowned in it himself. So the envied person fulfilled his objective while the envier has remained in tremendous loss. So think to yourself, how did your jealousy cause any harm to the person whom you envied? He experienced no loss in his bounties. On the contrary, he benefited by having your good deeds recorded in his book. What a contradiction! The envier desired poverty for the person, but his bounties remained the same,

and he had the added benefit of receiving the envier's good deeds. To make matters worse, the envier purchased the punishment of the Hereafter for himself, deprived himself of a life of contentment and comfort, and exchanged it for constant worry and worldly trouble. This is similar to a person wanting to strike an enemy's eye-ball but strikes his own self in the process, causing him to bust his own eye. Moreover, he gave his enemy, Satan, an opportunity to laugh at him. This is especially so if envy is levelled against an *ʿālim* or pious person. This is the worst form of jealousy.

A practical treatment for jealousy

The purpose of jealousy is to find fault with the envied person and to suffer grief and sorrow all the time. You should therefore impose on your *nafs* (self) and wilfully act against it. In other words, speak in praise of the envied person, be humble before him, and express your happiness and joy over the bounties which he has been conferred with. When you compel yourself to do this for a few days, you will develop love for the person. Once enmity towards him disappears, jealousy will automatically disappear. You will also be freed from the grief and sorrow which you were experiencing because of your jealousy.

A reply to an objection

You may feel that it is a natural thing to differentiate between friend and foe. You may feel it is not within your control to experience joy at seeing your enemy in comfort as you would when

you see your friend. And since this is not within man's control, he cannot be accountable for it.

My reply to this is that this is certainly correct, and if the matter remains to this point, it is not a sin. However, it is essential to abstain from all matters which are within your control. These are two:

(1) Never allow your tongue, other body parts and voluntary actions to succumb to the effects of jealousy. Instead, impose on your self to act on the contrary, as we explained above.

(2) The element of jealousy which is in your self and which is not allowing you to see Allāh's bounties on His servants must be disliked by your heart. You must think to yourself that this desire is going to destroy your *Dīn.*

If, after carrying out these two, the natural desire remains, i.e. you desire the well being of your friend and the destruction of your enemy, then do not bother about it because if you cannot remove these feelings, there will be no sin for them. But it is essential to detest them with your heart. An indication of this is that if you get the opportunity of removing the bounties enjoyed by the person whom you envy, you naturally desire to remove them, but you do not take any physical steps in this regard. For example, you are able to help the person whom you envy in ensuring his bounties remain or increase. Then although you dislike it, you help him. If you develop such an attitude, you can conclude that as far as power and will are concerned, you have acted according to the orders of Allāh *taʿālā* and absolved yourself. In such a

situation, it is not within your control to put an end to your natural feelings.

Also remember this point: When a person turns his gaze away from this world, he realizes that this world in unproductive and all its bounties are to end. Thus, if your enemy is enjoying prosperity, luxury and comfort, for how long is it going to last? If he is going to go to Hell because of his ill deeds, then of what benefit are these bounties of a few days? If he is going to go to Paradise [because of his good deeds], then of what comparison are these bounties to the eternal bounties of Paradise? We can conclude from this that to be jealous and to seethe at seeing your enemy happy is nothing but futile and useless. The entire creation is created by Allāh *taʿālā*. All humans are the beloved slaves of Allāh *taʿālā*. So whatever bounties are showered by the Beloved, their effects have to be manifested on His slaves. So if you see the effects of your Beloved's gifts on a person, you ought to be happy; not jealous and grief-stricken.

Note: *Māshā Allāh*! What an excellent explanation which is sufficient to completely uproot the illness of jealousy. If we were to think in the same manner with regard to pride and other ailments, it would be easy to treat them. Inspiration is from Allāh *taʿālā* alone.

My heart desires to quote a few couplets of Hadrat Murshidī Maulānā Muhammad Ahmad Sāhib *rahimahullāh* on the subject of jealousy, its repugnance and its treatment.

Why are you burning in the fire of jealousy? Why are you experiencing sorrow? Why are you displeased with the decisions of Allāh? Why are you heading towards the Hell-fire?

(Muhammad Qamaruz Zamān)

ANGER

All praise is due to Allāh *taʿālā*, this article of Hadrat Muslihul Ummat *rahimahullāh* – *Anger and its treatment* – is extremely enlightening and beneficial. Everyone should study it carefully. We have to bear in mind that Hadrat Muslihul Ummat *rahimahullāh* was an expert in the field of human psychology. This article was previously published in the book, *Maʿrifat-e-Haq*, and as a separate booklet as well. It is being republished for the benefit of all. Inspiration is from Allāh *taʿālā* alone. (Muhammad Qamaruz Zamān)

بِسْمِ اللهِ الرَّحْمٰنِ الرَّحِيْمِ

اَلْحَمْدُ للهِ رَبِّ الْعَالَمِيْنَ، وَالصَّلٰوةُ وَالسَّلَامُ عَلٰى خَيْرِ خَلْقِهِ مُحَمَّدٍ وَعَلٰى آلِهِ وَأَصْحَابِهِ أَجْمَعِيْنَ.

Of all the evil characteristics, people today mostly succumb to anger. This is especially so with the villagers who have been destroyed by it. They resort to harsh and uncouth speech at every given moment. There is no rein to their tongues. Rarely would you find a pious person among them. When a person is faced with matters which do not appeal to his temperament and he does not have the strength to exercise patience over them, he resorts to anger. One response to this is for him to be pleased with the *Dīnī* and worldly harms which result from his anger just as he is happy with his anger itself. He then complains about his anger. Whereas we see that whether he complains about it or not, he remains remorseful and ashamed in his heart, and realizes that no one is happy with him.

The second response is to suppress the anger even if this is painful. This one pain will be a shield against many other pains. It is easier to bear a single pain as opposed to many pains.

Now which of the two responses is more appropriate to *Dīn* and intelligence? It is this very evil character which has destroyed Muslim society, put an end to domestic peace and comfort, and caused life to become bitter. There is therefore a need to treat this illness.

A rational treatment

The rational treatment for anger is for the person to think about the harm which it causes to īmān. It damages and spoils īmān just as aloes spoils honey. He must also bear in mind the *Dīnī* and worldly harms which it causes. In this way, his anger will decrease. If consciousness of its harms is present in the self, it will strengthen the person into action. The more conscious he becomes of it, the more he will put it into practice until it suppresses anger completely.

Consciousness and awareness of the harms of anger has been prescribed as a treatment for it because if a person becomes angry while aware of its harms, it means he is not really conscious of them. This is similar to a person who knows the compulsion of salāh but still does not perform it. He will be told that salāh is compulsory. His not performing salāh is proof that he is not conscious of its compulsion. If not, he would have certainly performed it.

Another rational treatment for anger is for the person to know and recognize that it is extremely cowardly to give vent to it, and it is not laudable in the least. If a person cannot suppress his anger, it means his heart is weak. And this is a very serious defect. An angry person who strikes others or is abusive to them thinks that he is very brave and courageous. But I consider it to be proof of his cowardice. He cannot bear these matters, this is why he is doing all this. So this cannot be bravery.

On the other hand, a person who suppresses it and does not cross the limits in his anger – he is really the brave person. Because to suppress one's anger is not less than moving a mountain. In fact, it is more difficult. Only a true man can control his anger and has been endowed with a strong heart.

Being conscious of the above will also help him to suppress his anger. Man will be ashamed and endeavour to suppress it. He will think to himself: If I do not suppress it, it means I am cowardly.

A Hadīth states: A brave person is not one who is able to defeat another in a wrestle. A truly brave person is one who is able to control his anger at the time of anger, and is able to wrestle against his self.

An angry person commits many other sins

Another point to think about is that an angry person commits several other sins because of this one evil trait. While in a state of anger, a person wrongs others, harms others, and vexes his pride because this is what generally causes anger. Every anger manifests itself in the form of a wrong and an injustice. When a person commits a wrong, he ends

up harming others. Thus, anger becomes a cause of pride, oppression, tyranny, and harm. And each one of these are unlawful. So you see how many prohibitions a person commits because of just one anger?! We seek refuge in Allāh *ta'ālā*.

Anger is followed by remorse

The *'ulamā'* state that every angry person certainly feel remorse and regret thereafter. Just as drinking alcohol certain causes intoxication, anger certainly results in remorse. In other words, later on the person has to regret and rue over his anger and he thinks to himself that he was not justified in whatever he did. A person should therefore think that if all these things are experienced because of a single anger, intelligence demands on him to abstain from the actual catalyst so that all the subsidiaries are not experienced.

But the fact of the matter is that those who are accustomed to anger experience a certain joy from it. This joy also serves to make anger appealing to them. When such people are stopped, they say: "Brother! What can we do! We do not have the power to control it."

I am astonished when I hear this reply, and I say to them: "Why do you commit an unlawful and *harām* act and say that you are compelled? Why do you say you do not have the power to control it? You have all the power. How is it you can bear the heat of the stove on an intensely hot day? How do you bear a fever? How do you bear a headache? I have never seen anyone fighting against a fever and a headache so as to refuse it to come to him. Just

look at how the fever comes to him. He becomes completely subdued before it. So if you can bear all these things, you must bear your anger. What is the difference between the two? If there is any difference, then the only difference is that they are all conceptual (*takwīnī*),[1] while bearing anger is *tashrīʿī* (promulgated by the Sharīʿah).[2]

We have no alternative but to bear these conceptual matters. But we cannot bear anger. Do you know why? It is because we do not even consider it to be anger. In fact, all the evils which we commit is because we are not conscious of their harms. People merely have superficial knowledge of them. Had we considered anger to be evil on the level of how evil it really is, we will automatically reform. This is because there is a principle that when a person has repugnance for something, he will make sure he uproots it and casts it aside.

A person once said to me: "We used to think that we get angry because of a mental weakness. But now we have learnt that anger causes mental weakness." I said: "Very well, you have understood this much. I always understood that, and I understand something else. That is, not only does the mind become weak from anger, but even the

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[1] In other words, heat, cold, illness, good health, floods, earthquakes, etc. are all conceptual matters. Man's will cannot influence them. They occur as and when Allāh *taʿālā* wills. Man has no choice in the matter.
[2] *Tashrīʿī* matters include the following: s̲alāh, fasting, h̲ajj, zakāh, etc. Allāh *taʿālā* gave man the choice to carry them out or not carry them out. However, he is rewarded for carrying them out and punished for not.

heart. And if a person’s heart and mind both become weak, the effect of this shows on the rest of his body because the heart and mind are the main organs. Their weakness results in the weakness of the entire body.”

This is enough to understand the evil of anger: it destroys one’s īmān just as aloes spoils honey. Now if a person values his īmān, he will have to try to safeguard it. How, then, can he become angry? This is the *Dīnī* harm of anger. As for its worldly harm, it results in remorse and regret for one’s entire life. An angry person never enjoys happiness. The Qur’ān, in several places, praises those who suppress their anger. Allāh *taʿālā* describes the qualities of His special servants as follows:

وَالَّذِيْنَ يَجْتَنِبُوْنَ كَبَائِرَ الْإِثْمِ وَالْفَوَاحِشَ وَإِذَا مَا غَضِبُوْا هُمْ يَغْفِرُوْنَ. وَالَّذِيْنَ اسْتَجَابُوْا لِرَبِّهِمْ وَأَقَامُو الصَّلٰوةَ وَأَمْرُهُمْ شُوْرٰى بَيْنَهُمْ، وَمِمَّا رَزَقْنٰهُمْ يُنْفِقُوْنَ. وَالَّذِيْنَ إِذَا أَصَابَهُمُ الْبَغْيُ هُمْ يَنْتَصِرُوْنَ. وَجَزَاءُ سَيِّئَةٍ سَيِّئَةٌ مِّثْلُهَا، فَمَنْ عَفَا وَأَصْلَحَ فَأَجْرُهُ عَلَى اللهِ، إِنَّهُ لَا يُحِبُّ الظّٰلِمِيْنَ. وَلَمَنِ انْتَصَرَ بَعْدَ ظُلْمِهِ فَأُولٰئِكَ مَا عَلَيْهِمْ مِّنْ سَبِيْلٍ. إِنَّمَا السَّبِيْلُ عَلَى الَّذِيْنَ يَظْلِمُوْنَ النَّاسَ وَيَبْغُوْنَ فِي الْأَرْضِ بِغَيْرِ الْحَقِّ، أُولٰئِكَ لَهُمْ عَذَابٌ أَلِيْمٌ. وَلَمَنْ صَبَرَ وَغَفَرَ إِنَّ ذٰلِكَ لَمِنْ عَزْمِ الْأُمُوْرِ.

Those who abstain from major sins and immorality, and when they are angered, they forgive. Those who obeyed their Sustainer and established the salāh, and conduct their affairs by mutual consent, and who spend some of that which We have given them, those whom, when there is an attack against them, they retaliate. The retaliation for an evil is an evil like it. Then whoever pardons and reconciles, his reward lies with Allāh. Surely He does not like the

sinners. Whoever retaliates after being oppressed, then on such too there is no reproach. Reproach is only against those who oppress people and cause corruption in the land without justification. For such people is a painful punishment. However, whoever endures with fortitude and forgives, surely these are acts of courage.[1]

I say: Are these verses insignificant as glad tidings for the righteous? Now if these people do not practise on them, who else will? Is there no admonition in these verses for those who love Allāh *taʿālā* and His speech [the Qur'ān], and they recite it? Do these verses not require of the righteous servants to suppress their anger and control it? Are they not enough to encourage a person to tame his anger? Look at the virtue of patience and forgiveness as mentioned in the verse: "whoever endures with fortitude and forgives…", and look at the eloquent manner in which we are prompted to practise. Is this tone not enough for the obedient servants, and is it not sufficiently impressive?

I say: You can put a thousands ways and methods of removing anger on one side, and these verses to be read with understanding and comprehension on another side. If a person has the slightest love for Allāh *taʿālā*, there is no reason why he cannot give up his anger. Allāh *taʿālā* says in another place:

وَسَارِعُوْآ إِلٰى مَغْفِرَةٍ مِّنْ رَّبِّكُمْ وَجَنَّةٍ عَرْضُهَا السَّمٰوٰتُ وَالْأَرْضُ لا أُعِدَّتْ لِلْمُتَّقِيْنَ. الَّذِيْنَ يُنْفِقُوْنَ فِي السَّرَّآءِ وَالضَّرَّآءِ وَالْكٰظِمِيْنَ الْغَيْظَ وَالْعَافِيْنَ عَنِ النَّاسِ ط وَاللهُ يُحِبُّ الْمُحْسِنِيْنَ.

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[1] Sūrah ash-Shūrā, 42: 37-43.

Hasten towards forgiveness of your Sustainer and towards Paradise whose breadth is the heavens and the earth - prepared for the pious. Who go on spending in prosperity and in adversity, and suppress their anger, and pardon the people. And Allāh loves the doers of good.[1]

The Qur'ān emphasises pondering

Look! Allāh *ta'ālā* is urging us to hasten towards Paradise. Together with spending in His cause and pardoning people, He speaks about suppressing anger. Is this not enough for us? The fact of the matter is that when we read these verses, we do not spur our *īmān* and we do not ponder. On looking at the present condition of people, I am prompted to read this verse:

أَفَلَا يَتَدَبَّرُوْنَ الْقُرْآنَ، أَمْ عَلٰى قُلُوْبٍ أَقْفَالُهَا

Do they not ponder over the Qur'ān? Or are there locks on their hearts?[2]

Allāh *ta'ālā* is reprimanding man for not pondering and reflecting over the Qur'ān.

Suppressing anger entails emulation of Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu 'alayhi wa sallam*

All the Prophets *'alayhimus salām* and *Auliyā'* possessed excellent character. They did not have any evil trait. Anger is from among the evil characteristics which belongs to the unbelievers and flagrant sinners. The Prophets *'alayhimus*

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[1] Sūrah Āl 'Imrān, 3: 133-134.
[2] Sūrah Muhammad, 47: 24.

salām and *Auliyā'* are therefore free from such qualities. If a person follows Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* and is obedient to him, there can be nothing greater for him than to think that Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* was never characterized by unlawful anger. He was always forbearing, pardoning and overlooking. So if a person is overcome by anger, he must think about this so that he receives a share of emulating Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam*. What treasure can be greater for a follower of Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* than the ability to follow him? I do not think there is a more effective method for such people to abstain from this evil trait [of anger]. They must think to themselves: We are not emulating Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* in this attribute. Belief in him demands us to emulate him in this attribute as well. We are deprived of it and we are following Satan instead.

I do not think such thoughts are without benefit because if they prevail, it is not possible for an evil quality like anger to remain in a person. The mere thought that I am not on the way of Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* and I am not on his Sunnah will be enough to uproot this evil trait completely. But this is the thing which we do not think about nowadays. An angry person is neither following the Qur'ān nor emulating Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam*. Can there be a worse loss than this?!

Understand one thing at this point. Anger in itself is not a bad thing; incorrect usage of it is bad. After all, a person can rectify his *nafs* through anger and

carry out many *Dīnī* works through it. Allāh *taʿālā* says:

وَإِذَا مَا غَضِبُوْا هُمْ يَغْفِرُوْنَ

And when they are angered, they forgive.[1]

This shows that righteous believers also become angry. Why else would He say that they forgive when they become angry? If anger was evil in itself, Allāh *taʿālā* would have said that they do not become angry at all. This shows that anger can be experienced by pious people as well. But after this, their excellence lies in the fact that they control and suppress it, do not permit it to transgress the limits of the Sharīʿah, and emulate Rasūlullāh *s̲allallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* in this regard.

As for a person not experiencing anger at all, this is no achievement. Even a wall does not become angry, nor do the angels. Allāh *taʿālā* placed desires in man, but prohibited him against using them in matters which are against the Sharīʿah. In the same way, He placed anger in man, but imposed on him to control it and not to give vent to it in the wrong places. He should rather follow a course of forbearance and overlooking so that he is beloved by the creation in this world and is eligible for abundant rewards in the Hereafter.

Imām Ghazzālī *rah̲imahullāh* explains this theme in his introduction to *Dhamm al-Ghad̲ab* in a beautiful and enlightening manner. My heart desires to quote it here verbatim. He says:

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[1] Sūrah ash-Shūrā, 42: 37.

الحمد لله الذي لا يتكل على عفوه ورحمته إلا الراجون، ولا يحذر سوء غضبه وسطوته إلا الخائفون. الذي استدرج عباده من حيث لا يعلمون، وسلط عليهم الشهوات وأمرهم بترك ما يشتهون، وابتلاهم بالغضب وكلفهم كظم الغيظ فيما يغضبون، ثم حفهم بالمكاره واللذات وأملى لهم لينظر كيف يعملون، وامتحن به حبهم ليعلم صدقهم فيما يدعون، وعرفهم أنه لا يخفى عليه شيء مما يسرون وما يعلنون، وحذرهم أن يأخذهم بغتة وهم لا يشعرون، فقال تعالى: ما ينظرون إلا صيحة واحدة تأخذهم وهم يخصمون، فلا يستطيعون توصية ولا إلى أهلهم يرجعون.

All praise is due to Allāh on whom the hopeful alone rely on His pardon and mercy, and whose wrath and power none but the fearful ones fear. He is the one who gives respite to His servants in a manner which they do not even perceive. He created desires in them and ordered them to abstain from their desires. He placed the element of anger in them and imposed on them to suppress it. He then surrounded them with difficulties and enjoyments, and gave them respite to see how they act. He tested their love through it to gauge the genuineness in their claims of love. He informed them that none of their private and public affairs are concealed from Him. He warned them against seizing them suddenly, without their even perceiving it. Allāh taʿālā says: "They are only waiting for one cry which will seize them while they are disputing with each other. Then they will neither be able to make any will nor will they be able to return to their families."[1]

[1] Sūrah Yā Sīn, 36: 49-50.

In the above text, Imām Ghazzālī *ra<u>h</u>imahullāh* explains the wisdom and underlying reason behind the placement of desires and anger in man. In like manner, Maulānā Rūm *ra<u>h</u>imahullāh* explains the wisdom behind desires for the world through a beautiful example. He says:

> Desire for the world is like a furnace which heats the bathroom of *taqwā*.

In other words, firewood, coal and other waste is cast into a furnace. Not only are these items of no value, they are impure at times. But their benefit is that a fire is ignited and heated through them, water is heated from this fire, and food is cooked. In the same way, although worldly desire is in itself disliked, there is wisdom behind creating it and placing it in man. One of its benefits is that a person's piety is gauged. Those that are totally devoid of desire, e.g. inanimate objects, angels, cannot be referred to as *muttaqī* (pious).

So Allāh *taʿālā* created anger in man and ordered him to control and suppress it so that he may have the honour of being a forbearing person. If there was no anger, how could there be merit in the attribute of forbearance?

I am now quoting the merit of suppressing anger from *I<u>h</u>yā' al-ʿUlūm*. Pay careful heed.

The merit of suppressing anger

Rasūlullāh *<u>s</u>allallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* said that the person who suppresses his anger although he was in a position where he could give vent to it, Allāh *taʿālā* will raise him on the day of

Resurrection with his heart filled with Allāh's pleasure. Another narration states that his heart will be filled with peace and *īmān*. In other words, on the day of Resurrection he will have no fear of Hell and of Allāh's punishment.

Hadrat Ibn 'Umar *radiyallāhu 'anhu* narrates that Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu 'alayhi wa sallam* said: No one has swallowed a greater sip than the sip of anger.

Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu 'alayhi wa sallam* said: If a person swallows his anger despite having the ability to give vent to it, Allāh *ta'ālā* will summon him before the entire creation and give him the choice of selecting whichever doe-eyed damsel (*hūr*) he likes.

A person came to Hadrat Salmān Fārsī *radiyallāhu 'anhu* and said: "O 'Abdullāh! Advise me." He said: "Do not get angry." The person replied: "This is something which I cannot do." He said: "When anger comes to you, control your tongue and hands." (In other words, you should neither utter anything, nor become violent).

The harm which an angry person causes to another occurs when he uses his tongue or hands. Once he controls these two, the other will certainly be protected from harm. The benefit to the angry person is that if he continually does this, his anger will gradually subside and terminate. Giving vent to one's anger results in supporting it further, strengthening it and causing it to increase. But once it is curtailed from the outset, it will decrease gradually and come to an end eventually. If a person is not given food, he will become weak and

gradually die. The same applies to deeds and actions. They increase and strengthen one's *īmān*. The more deeds, the stronger the *īmān*. But if there are no actions, *īmān* will get weak. As this inaction increases, *īmān* comes to an end. The same applies to anger. If it is not supported by the tongue and hands, it will wane and come to an end.

What an excellent treatment for anger provided by Hadrat Salmān *radiyallāhu ʿanhu*. Hadrat Maulānā Ashraf ʿAlī Thānwī *rahimahullāh* who was Hakīmul Ummat (the physician of the *ummah*) would also prescribe the same treatment for anger. If anyone wrote to him complaining about anger within himself, he would advise the person not to act according to its demands. That is, do not utter anything with the tongue, nor resort to violence.

Hadrat Imām Ghazzālī *rahimahullāh* quotes a Hadīth in *Ihyā' al-ʿUlūm* in which Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* said: "Why does any of you not behave like Abū Damdam?" The Sahābah *radiyallāhu ʿanhum* enquired: "Who is Abū Damdam?" Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* replied: "He was a person of past times. When he used to get up in the morning, he would say: 'O Allāh! I give my honour in charity to the person who wrongs me today.'"[1]

Note: Glory to Allāh! What an excellent characteristic! It is an excellent example not only for the *sālikīn* (those treading the path of *tasawwuf*) but for all Muslims.

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[1] إحياء العلوم، ج ٣، ص ١٧٧.

The following is stated in *Akhlāq Muhsinī*:

> It is related that people asked Hadrat ʿĪsā *ʿalayhis salām*: "What is the severest thing?" He replied: "The wrath of Allāh *taʿālā*." They asked: "How can one be saved from His wrath?" He replied: "Give up your own anger." Maulānā Rūm *rahimahullāh* explains the same theme in his *Mathnawī*:
>
> An intelligent person asked Hadrat ʿĪsā *ʿalayhis salām*: "What is the severest thing?" He replied: "The severest thing is the anger of Allāh *taʿālā* from which even the Hell-fire trembles." He asked: "How can I protect myself from Allāh's anger?" He replied: "Give up your own anger in this world." To give up anger, desires and greed are the special teachings of the Prophets *ʿalayhimus salām*.

Note: Glory to Allāh! This prescription of Hadrat Īsā *ʿalayhis salām* is an elixir in itself. The followers of Muhammad *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* are in real need of it so that they can safeguard themselves against anger.

The following is mentioned in *Akhlāq Muhsinī* with regard to forbearance and tolerance.

> Naushīrwā asked his minister, Bazrchamar, what is the meaning of forbearance? He replied: "Forbearance is the salt on the table of character. If its letters (حلم) are reversed, it will form the

word (ملح) which means “salt”. Just as food without salt cannot be enjoyed, character without forbearance has no beauty.” Naushīrwā asked: “What is the sign of forbearance?” He replied: “There are three signs of a forbearing person: (1) If an angry and stern person speaks to him in an angry and harsh tone, he replies with sweet words. If he causes him discomfort with his actions, he replies with kindness. Should I tell you the peak of forbearance and tolerance? If a person gives you poison, give him sugar. The one who injures your heart with oppression and tyranny, give him gold like a gold-mine which constantly gives off gold. Do not be any less than a shady tree which gives fruit even if a person throws stones at it.”

Note: At this point, I remembered a poem written by Hadrat Maulānā Muhammad Ahmad Sāhib *rahimahullāh*:

To the one who shattered my heart with oppression and injury, Ahmad gave him *du‘ā’* from the depths of his heart.

(2) The second sign is that at the exact time which his flames of anger are raging and he is totally overcome by his anger, he chooses to remain silent. This is evidence of tranquillity in his heart and peace in his soul. This is how the Sufis treat anger.

(3) The third sign is that even if a person deserves punishment, he swallows his anger.

It is related that Hadrat Husayn *radiyallāhu ʿanhu* was seated on the dining floor with a few Arab noblemen. His slave appeared with a bowl of hot soup. He felt intimidated by all who were present and his foot tripped with the edge of the table cloth. The bowl slipped from his hand, fell on Hadrat Husayn's *radiyallāhu ʿanhu* head, and the soup flowed onto his face. Hadrat Husayn *radiyallāhu ʿanhu* looked at the slave, not with a view to punish him, but to discipline him. He immediately quoted this verse:

وَالْكَاظِمِيْنَ الْغَيْظَ

Those who suppress their anger.

Hadrat Husayn *radiyallāhu ʿanhu* said, "Very well, I have suppressed my anger." The slave said:

وَالْعَافِيْنَ عَنِ النَّاسِ

And those who pardon people.

He said: "Very well, I have pardoned you." The slave read the last part of the verse:

وَاللّٰهُ يُحِبُّ الْمُحْسِنِيْنَ

Allāh loves the doers of good.

Hadrat Husayn *radiyallāhu ʿanhu* said: "You are free, and I also undertake to see to your needs."

Those who are concerned with the outward consider it a mark of intelligence to reply evil with evil. But the real Allāh-fearing elders reply evil with good. It is easy to reply evil with evil. But if you are a real man, you must show affection to the one who causes you harm.[1]

In his commentary to the above verse, Imām Bayhaqī *rahimahullāh* relates a story which occurred with Hadrat ʿAlī ibn Husayn *radiyallāhu ʿanhu*. His slave woman was pouring *wudū'* water for him when the utensil slipped and the water fell on his clothes. He naturally got angry. When the slave woman perceived his anger, she read this verse:

وَالْكَاظِمِيْنَ الْغَيْظَ

Those who suppress their anger.

No sooner he heard this, the anger of this pious personality from the family of Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* subsided and he fell absolutely silent.

The slave woman then read:

وَالْعَافِيْنَ عَنِ النَّاسِ

And those who pardon people.

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[1] أخلاق محسني، ص ٣٣.

He said: "I have pardoned you with all my heart." She was an intelligent woman and read the last part of the verse:

وَاللّٰهُ يُحِبُّ الْمُحْسِنِيْنَ

Allāh loves the doers of good.

Hadrat ʿAlī ibn Husayn *radiyallāhu ʿanhu* said: "Go, you are free."[1]

The definition of a forbearing person

A forbearing person is one who does not slip from his place on account of the flood of anger. Whereas his rage is so intense that if a mountain were to come in his path, he would cast it aside. In like manner, the fire of anger does not affect him in the least, whereas the intensity of his heat is such that even a fireball would seek refuge from him. A poet says:

When forbearance enters a person, anger is defeated. Forbearance is the only thing that can cut off anger. Forbearance is the pillar of intelligence. A person who is not forbearing will become angry over the most trivial matters. Such a person is weak-minded, wretched and despicable.

Signs of good and evil character

Imām Ghazzālī *rahimahullāh* lists the signs of good and evil character. The essence of which is that good character can be translated as *īmān*, and evil

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[1] معارف القرآن، ج ٢، ص ١٨٩.

character as *nifāq* (hypocrisy). In other words, good character is the sum of the qualities which develop in a believer on account of his *īmān*. And the qualities which stem from hypocrisy are known as evil character. He then explains them in detail.

He goes on to say that patience and forbearance are the first of all the qualities through which a person's good character is tested. Thus, a person who complains about the bad character of another is proof of his own bad character. This is because good character is defined as *ihtimāl al-adhā* (bearing pains). If a person becomes vexed by others and complains about them, forbearance no longer remains in him. So he does not possess good character.

A Hadīth states that Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* was going somewhere, and Hadrat Anas *radiyallāhu ʿanhu* was with him. On the way, a Bedouin approached them from behind and tugged at Rasūlullāh's *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* shawl with force. This left a mark on his neck. The man said: "O Muhammad! Give me some of Allāh's wealth which you have." Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* turned around towards the man with a smile and said: "Give him something as well."

When the persecution of his people, the Quraysh, increased, he said:

اَللّٰهُمَّ اغْفِرْ لِقَوْمِيْ فَإِنَّهُمْ لَا يَعْلَمُوْنَ

O Allāh! Forgive my people for they do not know.

It is said that this was during the battle of U<u>h</u>ud. And on the same occasion, Allāh *taʿālā* revealed this verse:

إِنَّكَ لَعَلٰى خُلُقٍ عَظِيْمٍ

You are most certainly on the highest pedestal of good character.

Stories of forbearance from the lives of the *Auliyā'*

The above are a few examples from the life of Rasūlullāh *<u>s</u>allallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* who was an embodiment of good character. The *Auliyā'* emulated this Sunnah of his. There are incidents and stories of patience and forbearance from their lives which revive our *īmān*.

1. <u>H</u>a<u>d</u>rat Ibrāhīm ibn Ad-ham *ra<u>h</u>imahullāh* was walking towards a jungle when he met a soldier along the way. The soldier asked him: "Are you a slave?" He replied: "Yes." The soldier asked: "Where is the inhabited area?" He replied by pointing in the direction of the graveyard. The soldier thought that he probably did not understand his question, so he asked: "I am asking you about the town, the inhabited area, where is it?" He replied: "This is the graveyard here." The soldier became angry, struck him on his head, causing it to get injured, and took <u>H</u>a<u>d</u>rat towards the town. On reaching it, some people who knew <u>H</u>a<u>d</u>rat said: "This is Ibrāhīm ibn Ad-ham." The soldier had heard about him, and when he heard his name mentioned, he dismounted his steed immediately and fell at his feet, apologizing profusely.

Later on, Hadrat was asked: "Why did you tell him that you are a slave?" Hadrat replied: "He did not ask me whose slave I was, he asked me if I was a slave. And since I am Allāh's slave, I replied in the affirmative. You have now heard my reply. Now listen further: When he struck me on my head, I made *duʿā'* to Allāh *taʿālā* for Paradise for him." They asked: "And why is that? After all he wronged you?!" Hadrat replied: "I was absolutely convinced that I would certainly be rewarded in the Hereafter for whatever harm he inflicted on me. But then my self-respect could not allow me to receive good because of him, and for him to receive evil because of me. So I made *duʿā'* for Paradise for him when he struck me. In this way, I will get Paradise and so will he."

Glory to Allāh! Look at how these personalities emulated the Sunnah in displaying noble character. If such was their interaction with their enemies, what must it have been with their friends!

2. Imām Ghazzālī *rahimahullāh* relates an incident concerning Abū ʿUthmān Hiyarī *rahimahullāh*. A person invited him with a view to testing his character and forbearance. When the shaykh reached the place at the appointed time, the person said to him: "I did not get an opportunity to prepare the meal. You will have to go back." Abū ʿUthmān *rahimahullāh* departed. He walked for some distance when the person caught up with him and said: "Hadrat, you may come now, we have something available." When he reached the person's door, the man apologized once again by saying: "Hadrat, I was wrong. There is no food." Abū

ʿUthmān *rahimahullāh* went back. The person came to him a third time, said something to him, and took him back to his house.

In short, this person did this several times but there was not the least effect of annoyance on the face of Hadrat Abū ʿUthmān *rahimahullāh*. The person eventually fell at his feet and said: "Hadrat, forgive my audacity. I had actually wanted to test your character, and I did it."

Glory to Allāh! Look at his noble character! On hearing this man's words, Hadrat said to him: "*Lā haula wa lā qūwwata illā billāh!* Do you consider this to be character and piety? Such character is even found in dogs. When you call it, it will come to you. When you scold it, it will go away."

Note: Glory to Allāh! This shows the extent of his recognition and servitude. Thousands of *karāmāt* (miracles) can be sacrificed for it.

3. Bāyazīd Bustāmī was passing through an alley when someone emptied a utensil filled with ash on him. He dismounted from his conveyance immediately and fell into prostration in gratitude to Allāh *taʿālā*. He then began dusting off the ash from his clothes and said nothing at all to the one who threw it. Someone asked him: "How come you did not say anything to him!?" He replied: "If a person is eligible for the fire and peace is made with him for ash, how can it be permissible for him to become angry over it?"

4. Ahnaf ibn Qays *rahimahullāh* was asked: "From whom did you learn forbearance?" He replied: "From Qays ibn ʿĀsim." The person asked

him: "Which incident of forbearance did you hear about him?" He replied: "He was in his house one day with his small child sleeping near him. A slave woman was grilling meat on a skewer and brought the meat with the skewer to him. The skewer fell from her hand and fell on the child. The child got burnt and died immediately. The slave woman became terrified and Qays realized this. He said to her: "There is no need at all for you to be terrified. I have freed you for Allāh's sake."

5. Yahyā ibn Ziyād Hārithī *rahimahullāh* had a slave of bad character. Someone asked him: "Why do you still keep him despite his bad character? Why don't you sell him?" He replied: "No. I am keeping him so that I may develop the quality of forbearance within me. When I am angered by his bad character, I will bear it and I will gradually develop forbearance within me."

The piety, patience and forbearance of Hadrat Hasan *radiyallāhu ʿanhu*

When he was poisoned, his liver was severely damaged. He said: "I was poisoned several times before, but it was not like this."

Hadrat Husayn *radiyallāhu ʿanhu* said to him: "O brother! Who can we suspect of doing this to you?" He replied: "Why are you asking this?" He replied: "So that I could kill him." He said: "If the person is the one whom I suspect, then Allāh's grasp is very severe and He will inflict a terrifying punishment on

him. And if he is not the one, I do not want an innocent person to be killed for my sake.”[1]

The extent of patience of Hadrat ʿAlī Zayn al-ʿĀbidīn

Hadrat ʿAlī Zayn al-ʿĀbidīn ibn al-Husayn ibn ʿAlī *radiyallāhu ʿanhu* emerged from the musjid one day when he met a person who began swearing him profusely. Hadrat Zayn’s servants and attendants advanced towards the man, but he stopped them and said: “Hold on for a moment with regard to this man.” He then turned towards the man and said: “There are many things about me which are concealed from you. If you have any need, tell me and I will help you.” The man fell ashamed. Hadrat removed his blessed shawl and gave it to the man, and also instructed for 1 000 dirhams to be given to him. The man said: “I testify that you are certainly from the progeny of Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam.*”

The patience of Hadrat Imām Abū Hanīfah *rahimahullāh*

Imām Abū Hanīfah *rahimahullāh* had a Jewish neighbour whose toilet waste water used to fall in Imām Abū Hanīfah’s house. He would sweep it daily and throw it in the refuse dump, but he never let the Jewish neighbour come to know of this. The Jew eventually learnt of it after ten years. He went to Imām Abū Hanīfah *rahimahullāh*, cried before him and became a Muslim.

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[1] *Tabaqāt*, vol. 1, p. 23. *Aqwāl-e-Salaf*, vol. 1, p. 383 (English translation).

The books of *sīrah* contain many incidents which depict the patience, forbearance and tolerance of Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam*. Two very beneficial and effective incidents are related in my book, *Jāmiʿ al-Huqūq*. They ought to be read. In addition to this, there are many famous stories and incidents in this regard from the lives of the Sahābah *radiyallāhu ʿanhum*, Tābiʿīn, Tabaʿ Tābiʿīn and the Imāms of jurisprudence. These are very useful as forms of advice and admonition, and in creating softness in the heart.

The honourable Maulānā ʿAbd al-Qayyūm Haqqānī writes in his book, *Difāʿ Abū Hanīfah*, under the heading: Responding to vulgar language with good character:

Those who were envious of Imām Abū Hanīfah *rahimahullāh* would regularly instigate the hooligans of the city to abuse him verbally. Biographers quote countless incidents in this regard. We are quoting one incident to serve as an example.

One such hooligan began following Imām Abū Hanīfah *rahimahullāh* on the road and began hurling abuses at him with a view to getting a similar response from him. But Imām Abū Hanīfah *rahimahullāh* continued towards his house with his head lowered. When the hooligan received no response from him, he addressed him fretfully: "What, do you think I am a dog which is barking at you while you are not responding?" In a similar incident, Imām Abū Hanīfah *rahimahullāh* reached his house, turned to the hooligan and said: "Brother! I have now reached my house and I will

be going inside. If you have not had enough, I will wait here and you can give full vent to your feelings."

My heart now desires to quote a poem of Hadrat Murshidī Maulānā Muhammad Ahmad Sāhib *rahimahullāh* who himself was an embodiment of pain and love. His poem is an indication of his high position and hints at his salient attributes of patience and forbearance.

> To the one who shattered my heart with oppression and injury, Ahmad gave him *du'ā'* from the depths of his heart.

He says elsewhere:

> I do not love the roses only, rather, I love the entire garden. I also love the thorns [of the garden].

The respected Muhammad Hasīm Sāhib Rehbar depicts the life of Hadrat Maulānā Muhammad Ahmad Sāhib *rahimahullāh* in the following couplets:

> Through the loftiness of his character and the magic of his speech, he enamoured the enemy to himself. What does the world know about what his heart is feeling? He has concealed his sorrow behind the veil of a smile.

Mufakkir Islam Hadrat Maulānā Sayyid Abul Hasan 'Alī Miyā Nadwī *rahimahullāh* writes with regard to the principal of Dār al-'Ulūm Deoband, Hakīm al-Islam Hadrat Maulānā Qārī Muhammad Tayyib Sāhib *rahimahullāh*: There were times when some

members of the board of trustees used to address him in extremely harsh tones. But Hadrat Maulānā Qārī Muhammad Tayyib Sāhib *rahimahullāh* used to bear it all. He would not even permit any pain to be seen on his face. However, it would later result in fever. These pious servants of Allāh *taʿālā* were certainly glittering stars of knowledge, merit, justice and forbearance. They were illuminated from the lamp of prophet-hood and the light of servitude. Their elevated position is reflected by the following couplets of Iqbāl Ahmad Suhayl Aʿzamgarhī. This poem received the approval of all sections of society. The lover of Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam*, Hadrat Maulānā Muhammad Ahmad Sāhib *rahimahullāh*, was especially impressed by it and he used to quote it regularly with genuine feeling and emotion.

> To those who threw thorns in his path, verbally abused him, and pelted him with stones – he [*sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam*] sprinkled the dew of love on them. In return for their persecution, he gave them a sip of cure. He listened to their accusations and criticisms, and replied with supplication in their favour. He bore the injuries himself, but applied the balm and plaster to them. *Sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam.*

There are times when anger is better than forbearance

Thus far, we explained the merit of forbearance. *Akhlāq Muhsinī* states that there are occasions and

times when anger is better than forbearance. The following is mentioned therein:

> You ought to know that there are many occasions where anger is better than forbearance. Anger for the sake of worldly greed and avarice, or out of pride and arrogance is reprehensible. But it is most liked and praiseworthy for the sake of teaching matters of *Dīn* and preserving the Sharīʿah. For example, if a person sees his wife acting deceitfully with him, forbearance in such a situation will be disliked rationally, traditionally, and also according to the Sharīʿah. Such a person falls from grace in the sight of respectable people. However, if self-respect demands absence of anger and no harshness, then the excellence of a person will lie in his ability to assess a situation, see whether forbearance or anger is required, and then make the correct decision. Harshness and softness are both desirable in their correct places. Become a flower where you have to be one, and a thorn if there is a need to be one.

It was stated previously that revenge is permissible at the time of anger. But there are certain restrictions to it imposed by the Sharīʿah. It is stated in *Iḫyā’ al-ʿUlūm* that if a person commits a wrong, it is not permissible to reply with the same wrong. For example, backbiting in reply to backbiting, impurity in reply to impurity, vulgar language in reply to vulgar language. The same

applies to other sins. That is, the recompense for them is what the Sharīʿah has stipulated. This is detailed in the books of jurisprudence.

Rasūlullāh *s̲allallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* said that if a person taunts you for a defect which is within you, do not reply by taunting him for a defect which is in him.

Rasūlullāh *s̲allallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* said that if two persons engage in abusing each other verbally, then the sin of it will be shouldered by the person who initiated the argument as long as the other [oppressed] party does not transgress the limits. This is because if he transgresses the limits, he himself will become the oppressor and the first person will become the oppressed.

The condition of present day people

Unfortunately the situation today is different. If a person were to say one thing to another, then instead of the latter exercising patience and swallowing whatever was said so that the sin will remain on the shoulders of the other person, he will reply by saying ten things against the person. And he will still consider himself to be the wronged party. The above quoted H̲adīth refutes their way of thinking. Since anger causes this immediate response in every person, a ruler (and any other person who is of authority over others, e.g. a spiritual mentor, a teacher, a father, etc.) should not mete out punishment while in a state of anger because anger in such a situation could prompt him to mete out more punishment than required.

When a person is angry at another person, he wants to provide relief to his self by giving vent to his anger. An angry person should therefore exact revenge solely for Allāh's sake and not for his own self and ego. If he does this, he will not transgress the limits of revenge.

When Hadrat 'Umar *radiyallāhu 'anhu* saw a drunk person, he wanted to apprehend him and punish him. But this drunk man began swearing him and hurling abuses at him. Hadrat 'Umar *radiyallāhu 'anhu* left him and continued on his way. Someone asked him: "O Amīr al-Mu'minīn! He swore you and you left him!?" He replied: "Yes. When he swore me, I became angry. If I were to punish him, it would have been to satisfy my ego. I do not want to punish anyone for myself."

This incident prompts me to quote the following couplet:

أولئك آبائي فجئني بمثلهم – إذا جمعتنا يا جرير المجامع

Such were my forefathers. O Jarīr! Produce the like of them when we meet in the assemblies.

It is stated in *Ihyā' al-'Ulūm* that forbearance is superior to suppressing one's anger. This is because suppressing anger requires imposing forbearance on one's self. This means that a person will initially have to suppress and control his anger. When he does this regularly, he will get into the habit of suppressing which would eventually lead to forbearance. A person has to really strive and impose on himself to control it. But once he becomes used to it, it becomes his habit and he

does not respond in a fiery manner. Even if he were to become angry occasionally, he will not be vexed by it. When he reaches this level, we refer to it as forbearance. It is a sign that the person's intellect is in control and his powers of anger have been subdued. But as we said at the beginning, a person has to initially compel himself to be forbearing.

Rasūlullāh *s̲allallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* said that knowledge comes from studying, and forbearance from imposing it on one's self. This means that knowledge will only come when a lot of time is first spent in studying and acquiring knowledge. In the same way, forbearance will only come when he spends a lot of time imposing it on his self. This means he must impose it on his self, and bear pain to control and suppress his anger.

Forbearance needs the tutelage of a forbearing tutor

We stated above that knowledge comes from studying, and forbearance from imposing it on one's self. From this we can understand that if a person wants to study, he will have to go through a course of education. If there is no teacher, how can there be any student? In the same way, a person will learn forbearance if there is someone to teach it to him. This teacher will have to know the merits of forbearance and the manner of acquiring it. Unfortunately no attention is paid in this regard, and no one to teach these matters. How, then, can the qualities of forbearance and humility come to a person?

The gist of the above is that some effort and pain will have to be endured to acquire knowledge and forbearance. But this rule is not restricted to knowledge and forbearance. Rather, it applies to all attributes and qualities. A person first has to impose on his self and temperament, only then does it become second nature to him. For example, a person wants to become chaste. He will have to impose chastity on his self and, after some days, he will acquire this quality and it will become easy for him.

Hadrat Maulānā Rashīd Ahmad Gangohī *rahimahullāh* taught this very same principle to a seeker. In is mentioned in his *Maktūbāt*: Impose your temperament towards reliance (*tawakkul*) and the removal of dangers and fears [from your mind]. It will be difficult in the beginning, but will become second nature after some time. [As stated in a Hadīth]: Allāh *taʿālā* bestows chastity to the one who seeks it. This applies to all qualities and attributes.

In his *Ihyā' al-ʿUlūm*, Imām Ghazzālī *rahimahullāh* provides a very practical treatment for anger. One of the ways of treatment is for a person to say *Aʿūdhu billāhi minash shaytānir rajīm* (I seek refuge in Allāh from the accursed Satan) at the time of anger. He writes as follows:

وأما العمل فأن تقول بلسانك أعوذ بالله من الشيطان الرجيم. هكذا أمر رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم أن يقال عند الغضب. وكان رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم إذا غضبت عائشة رضي الله عنها أخذ بأنفها وقال: يا عويش! قولي أللهم رب النبي محمد اغفرلي ذنبي وأذهب غيظ قلبي وأجرني من مضلات الفتن. فيستحب أن يقول ذلك،

فإن لم يزل بذلك فاجلس إن كنت قائما، واضطجع إن كنت جالسا، واقرب من الأرض التي منها خلقت، لتعرف بذلك ذل النفس، واطلب بالجلوس والإضطجاع السكون، فإن سبب الغضب الحرارة وسبب الحرارة الحركة، فقد قال رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم إن الغضب جمرة توقد في القلب، ألم تروا إلى انتفاخ أوداجه وحمرة عينه، فإذا وجد أحدكم من ذلك شيئا فإن كان قائما فليجلس، وإن كان جالسا فلينم، فإن لم يزل بذلك فليتوضأ بالماء البارد، أو يغتسل، فإن النار لا يطفئها إلا الماء.

فقد قال صلى الله عليه وسلم: إذا غضب أحدكم فليتوضأ بالماء، فإن الغضب من النار، وإنما في رواية إن الغضب من الشيطان، وإن الشيطان خلق من النار، وإنما تطفأ النار بالماء، فإذا غضب أحدكم فليتوضأ.

The practical treatment for anger is that you must say: Aʿūdhu billāhi minash shayṯānir rajīm. This is what Rasūlullāh s̱allallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam instructed us to say at the time of anger. When H̱aḏrat ʿĀ'ishah raḏiyallāhu ʿanhā used to get angry, Rasūlullāh s̱allallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam would hold her nose and say: O ʿUwaysh![1] Say:

اَللّٰهُمَّ رَبَّ النَّبِيِّ مُحَمَّدٍ، اِغْفِرْلِيْ ذَنْبِيْ، وَأَذْهِبْ غَيْظَ قَلْبِيْ، وَأَجِرْنِيْ مِنْ مُضِلَّاتِ الْفِتَنِ

O Allāh! The Rabb of the Prophet Muẖammad. Forgive me my sin, remove the anger of my heart, and give me refuge against deviating tribulations.

It is desirable to say the above. If your anger does not subside, sit down if you were standing; lie down if you were sitting; and get closer to the ground from which you were created. By getting closer to the

[1] This is the diminutive of the word ʿĀ'ishah, said out of love and affection.

ground you will realize your own insignificance. Seek to obtain tranquillity through your sitting and lying down. This is because heat and rage are the causes of anger. And heat is caused through motion. Rasūlullāh sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam said: "Anger is an ember which is ignited in the heart." Do you not see how the angry person's veins expand and his eyes become red? So if any of you experiences this, he must sit down if he was standing, lie down if he was sitting. If his anger continues, he must perform wudū' with cold water or take a bath because nothing but water can extinguish fire.

Rasūlullāh sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam said: "If any of you gets angry, he must perform wudū' with water because anger emanates from the fire." Another narration states: "Anger is from Satan, and Satan was created from fire. And fire is extinguished by water. So if any of you gets angry, he must perform wudū'."

I consider it appropriate to quote a short article of Hadrat *rahimahullāh* titled *The way to salvation from human and jinn devils.* I am quoting it verbatim.

The way to salvation from human and jinn devils

There are generally two causes for the worries and hardships which are experienced by man. One is the *shayātīn al-ins* (devils among mankind). This means that a human is bent on enmity and hostility towards a person and does not leave him. This would obviously cause much restrictions and worries to the person. Sometimes it is the *shayātīn*

al-jinn who are bent on causing him harm. They will scare and startle him from time to time and cause man to lose his balance and well-being. Allāh *taʿālā* teaches us how to safeguard ourselves from these two.

With regard to the first [devils from mankind], He says:

إِدْفَعْ بِالَّتِيْ هِيَ أَحْسَنُ السَّيِّئَةَ، نَحْنُ أَعْلَمُ بِمَا يَصِفُوْنَ

Repulse their evil in a manner which is best. We know fully well all that they attribute to you.

Ibn Kathīr *ra<u>h</u>imahullāh* writes that an effective remedy against the evil and harm which a person experiences through his intermingling and interactions with people is for him to be kind towards them. This will replace a person's enmity with sincerity, and malice with love. The same theme is mentioned elsewhere in the Qur'ān as follows:

إِدْفَعْ بِالَّتِيْ هِيَ أَحْسَنُ، فَإِذَا الَّذِيْ بَيْنَكَ وَبَيْنَهُ عَدَاوَةٌ كَأَنَّهُ وَلِيٌّ حَمِيْمٌ، وَمَا يَلَقَّاهَا إِلَّا الَّذِيْنَ صَبَرُوْا، وَمَا يَلَقّٰهَا إِلَّا ذُوْ حَظٍّ عَظِيْمٍ.

Reply with that which is best. You will then see that he, between whom and you there was enmity, shall be as though he is your close friend. This is only achieved by those who are forbearing. This is only achieved by him who is endowed with great fortune.[1]

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[1] Sūrah Fu<u>ss</u>ilat/<u>H</u>ā Mīm Sajdah, 41: 34-35.

The good fortune mentioned in this verse refers to good fortune in this world and in the Hereafter. Its effect in this world is that every person loves him and remains happy with him. In the Hereafter he receives Paradise and Allāh's *taʿālā* pleasure.

As for safeguarding one's self from the second enemy [devils from jinn], we have to seek Allāh's *taʿālā* protection against Satan's promptings and whisperings. The jinn are so harmful and their enmity towards man is so firmly embedded that no planning against them can succeed, nor can any good character towards them be of any avail. Obviously, when man cannot combat his enemy by himself, he seeks the help of someone more powerful. Cases are presented before judges in the courts because a person cannot fight for his rights by himself. Allāh *taʿālā* has been very kind to His servants by teaching them supplications through which they can protect themselves against Satan. It is mentioned in a H̲adīth that Rasūlullāh *s̲allallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* used to say:

أَعُوْذُ بِاللهِ السَّمِيْعِ الْعَلِيْمِ مِنَ الشَّيْطَانِ الرَّجِيْمِ مِنَ هَمَزِهِ وَنَفَخِهِ وَنَفَسِهِ

I seek refuge in Allāh, the all-hearing the all-knowing, from the whisperings, promptings and instigations of Satan.

The *Musnad* of Imām Ah̲mad *rah̲imahullāh* states that ʿAmr ibn Shuʿayb *rad̲iyallāhu ʿanhu* narrates that Rasūlullāh *s̲allallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* used to teach them certain words which they should read when they go to sleep when they are vexed by Satan. The words are:

بِسْمِ اللهِ أَعُوْذُ بِكَلِمَاتِ اللهِ التَّامَّةِ مِنْ غَضَبِهِ وَعِقَابِهِ وَمِنْ شَرِّ عِبَادِهِ وَمِنْ هَمَزَاتِ الشَّيَاطِيْنِ وَأَنْ يَحْضُرُوْنَ.

In the name of Allāh. I seek refuge in the perfect words of Allāh taʿālā from His wrath, His punishment, from the evil of His servants, and from the promptings of Satan coming to me.

ʿAbdullāh ibn ʿUmar *radiyallāhu ʿanhu* used to emphasise on his mature children to read these words at the time of sleeping. As for the little children who could not memorize these words, he used to write them down and tie them around their necks as a *taʿwīdh* (amulet).

Note: This clearly shows the permissibility of wearing a *taʿwīdh*.

Do you see the many things which are mentioned in the Qur'ān! Allāh *taʿālā* revealed the Qur'ān so that man could succeed in this world. At the same time, He provided him with solutions and treatments for problems and difficulties which he would experience. Now what treatment can there be for us if we do not study the Qur'ān and do not pay attention to the treatment which it provides for us!?

Two important statements of Hadrat Muslihul Ummat *rahimahullāh*

1. There are two types of anger, viz. *nafsānī* (anger of the self, for selfish motives) and *īmānī* (for the sake of one's *īmān*) and there is a world of difference between the two. *Īmānī* anger has a special sweetness and effulgence. There is no darkness whatsoever in it. On the other hand,

darkness and turbidity is perceived in *nafsānī* anger. So when you get angry, and you feel and perceive darkness and turbidity within you, you must conclude that this anger is from your *nafs*. Because if it was on the basis of *īmān*, there would have been *nūr* (light and effulgence) in it. Just as you perceive an inner light in your heart when you perform s̲alāh, in the same way, anger for the sake of *īmān* produces the same feeling in the heart. Another difference between the two is that in *īmānī* anger, a person does not transgress the limits; he remains within them. But in *nafsānī* anger, the person transgresses the limits, resulting in badly chosen words emanating from his mouth. May Allāh *taʿālā* protect us all from this. Āmīn.

2. The *ʿulamā'* have explained the different occasions for harshness and leniency. A person of full insight will find it easy to understand, but a novice will find difficulty. It will be difficult for him to differentiate, as stated in *Ih̲yā' al-ʿUlūm*:

وإنما الكامل من يميز مواقع الرفق عن مواقع العنف، فيعطي كل أمر حقه، فإن قاصر البصيرة أشكل عليه حكم واقعة من المواقع، فليكن ميله إلى الرفق، فإن النجاح معه في الأكثر.[1]

A person of perfection is one who can distinguish between the occasions of leniency and harshness, and accord each occasion its due. As for a person who lacks insight and finds it difficult to make a clear decision [with regard to adopting leniency or harshness], he should incline himself towards

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[1] إحياء العلوم، ج ٣، ص ١٨٦.

leniency because this is where success lies in most cases.

We learn from this that a person of full insight – having the ability to differentiate between occasions of leniency and harshness – must follow the course which he considers correct. But the one who is lacking in this regard must follow the course of leniency and softness because this is the safest route, and there is more hope of success in it. But if he follows a course harshness and severity, there is a greater likelihood of harm and loss. Understand this well. (Muhammad Qamaruz Zamān)

Elections cause tribulations and are preludes to anger

Coincidentally, I came across a reformational article of Hadrat Muslihul Ummat Maulānā Shāh Wasīyyullāh Sāhib *rahimahullāh* wherein he reprimands his people for their unprincipled response to the elections. He taught them the need to understand, comprehend and to have foresight. This article was published as a pamphlet titled, *al-Mukhātabah baʿdal Muʿātabah.* Since the conditions during elections have retrogressed from bad to worse, studying this article will be beneficial for everyone – *inshā Allāh.* It is quoted verbatim.

All praise is due to Allāh *taʿālā*. Peace and salutations to Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam.*

I would like to tell you something, please listen attentively. You must have seen that I am very displeased with the people of a certain place. You

should at least understand the reason for so much of displeasure.

The fact of the matter is that I am seeing religious retrogression and immorality creeping very rapidly among the Muslims. People are becoming totally free of our *Dīn* and respect for the *ʿulamāʼ* and *mashāʼikh* (who are our real leaders) is decreasing. This terrible condition of our people is painful for any ordinary person having the slightest amount of feeling and sentiment. It is also very disturbing to me.

For the sake of your religious wellbeing and solely to fulfil the responsibility of advising you, I feel the need to at least save you from misguidance. A group of irreligious people has also developed among you. This group neither believes in Allāh *taʿālā* and Rasūlullāh *s̲allallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam*, nor the *Dīn* and the Qur'ān. Your relationship with them, and theirs with you is most dangerous and destructive. *Al-h̲amdulillāh* you are Muslims and you have *īmān* in your hearts. This is why there is full respect in your hearts for Allāh *taʿālā* and Rasūlullāh *s̲allallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam*. But as for the generation which is to come after you (if you do not make arrangements to take care of it), it will not be like you. Your children will intermingle with irreligious people and – Allāh forbid – become irreligious themselves. This will cause immense pain and discomfort to your soul when you are in your graves. This is the scene before us. I cannot bear to see retrogression to creep among people who accept me, believe me, and to whom I go quite frequently. This is why I took them to task in a

severe and harsh manner. My purpose was solely my desire for their wellbeing.

You people have a bond with me, and a person normally advises those with whom he is attached. I am not even addressing those who do not have a bond with me. This is why I am telling you that if you have some feelings for me and consider me to be something, and you realize that if we are living in this world, there are certain things which we will have to understand, then when you are faced with a problem, you will come to me for a solution. You will come to me and ask me for answers to different issues and situations. Then whatever I say to you, you will accept without any reservation. I would have told you to remain silent, you would have remained silent and remained aloof from everyone. Although I do not restrict a person to any particular aspect when it comes to these new things – in fact, I tell him to do whatever his heart tells him – I certainly prohibit him from getting involved in issues which will break the unity of the Muslims, and I will certainly disapprove of these things. I really want you to bear in mind all these factors when doing anything. If you cannot find a course which is balanced, come and consult with me so that disunity among our people is avoided. In today's times, it is most essential to avoid disunity and to stop others from it. Together with this, it is necessary for all Muslims to become engrossed in services to the *Dīn* will full determination and fortitude. They must resort to plans which will safeguard their forthcoming generations. This is what really needs to be done. Actually, every Muslim ought to have become occupied in setting

right his *Dīn* and rectifying his character. But the believers are still heedless in this regard. This is most unfortunate.

This is all I wanted to say to you at present. May Allāh *taʿālā* bless us with sound understanding, and the inspiration to tread the correct *Dīn*. Our final prayer is that all praise is due to Allāh *taʿālā*, the Rabb of the worlds.

Wasīyyullāh, *may Allāh pardon him*
Bakhshī Bāzār, Allāhābād
10 Dhū al-Qaʿdah 1381 A.H.

CONCLUSION

Muhammad Qamaruz Zamān Allāhābādī

After reading these three articles (on hypocrisy, pride and anger) of Hadrat Muslihul Ummat Maulānā Shāh Wasīyyullāh Sāhib *rahimahullāh*, you must have gauged how much attention he paid to rectifying character in the light of the Qur'ān and Sunnah.

It is essential for all Muslims, especially those who are associated to Hadrat Muslihul Ummat *rahimahullāh,* to pay special attention to the rectification of their character so that they may earn the best of this world and the Hereafter. The Qur'ān and Hadīth generally give the glad tidings and promises of Allāh's *taʿālā* pleasure and admission into Paradise when good character is adopted. And they issue warnings of Allāh's *taʿālā* displeasure for evil character.

Unfortunately, let alone the masses, even the *ʿulamā'*, leaders, honourable *hājīs* (pilgrims) and responsible members of religious organizations consider one single course of action to be enough, consider this one single effort to be the effort of *Dīn* in its entirety, and show total disregard for other departments of *Dīn*. Now you decide for yourself, how can the total rectification of the *ummah* be realized when it is not even taught all this? It is therefore necessary for every individual to practise on every department of *Dīn*. Only then will he be

considered religious in the true sense of the word, and be an embodiment of the verse:

أُدْخُلُوْا فِي السِّلْمِ كَافَّةً

Enter into submission in totality.

It is especially necessary for those who are engaged in serving the *Dīn* to practise on what they preach. Without this, our teaching and reminding the masses will not have the desired acceptance and receptiveness from them. We witness this all the time. H̲ad̲rat Mus̲lih̲ul Ummat *rah̲imahullāh* used to quote these couplets very often:

أيها الرجل المعلم غيره – هلا لنفسك كان ذا التعليم

O you who teaches others! Why do you not teach yourself?

تصف الدواء لذي السقام وذي الضنا – كيما يصح به وأنت سقيم

You prescribe medicines for the sick and weak so that they may experience good health through them, but you yourself are sick.

إبدأ بنفسك فانهها عن غيها – إذا انتهت عنه فأنت حكيم

Start off by restraining your self from deviation. If it desists from deviation, you will be worthy of being a wise man.

فهناك تقبل ما تقول ويقتدى – ما تقول منك وينفع التعليم

Only then will what you say be accepted and emulated; and your teaching be beneficial.

Glory to Allāh! What admonitory couplets! They ought to be made into amulets for those engaged in religious services. If we act according to its demands, our teaching, training, tutoring, lecturing and advising will not go to waste. Instead, it will certainly be beneficial.

We used to constantly hear Hadrat Muslihul Ummat *rahimahullāh* quoting these lines of Imām Ghazzālī *rahimahullāh*:

(الوظيفة الثامنة) أن يكون المعلم عاملا بعلمه فلا يكذب قوله فعله، لأن المعلم يدرك بالبصائر، والعمل يدرك بالأبصار، وأرباب الأبصار أكثر، فإذا خالف العمل المعلم منع الرشد.[1]

The eighth duty of a teacher is to practise on his knowledge so that his actions do not contradict his words. Knowledge is acquired through insight, while actions are seen with the physical eyes. The external physical eyes are more in number [they are constantly watching]. So if a teacher's actions contradict his knowledge, the door of rectitude and guidance will be shut. (Tadhkirah Muslihul Ummat, vol. 1, p. 228)

Imām Ghazzālī *rahimahullāh* also said:

تقويم الغير مرتب تقويم نفسه

The ability to rectify others is dependent on rectifying one's own self.

From the above statements of our elders, you must have gauged that it is necessary for every teacher,

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[1] إحياء العلوم، ج ١، ص ٢٢٨.

tutor, mentor and inviter towards Allāh *taʿālā* to practise on his knowledge and rectify his character. No person is excluded from this; neither the shaykh nor the *murīd*, neither an *ʿālim* nor an ordinary person, neither a mentor nor an inviter. It is essential for every person to rectify his intention and follow the Sunnah way in every department of teaching, training and tutoring. Only then will all our actions – whether individual or collective – be accepted by Allāh *taʿālā*, and Allāh's creation will gain benefit in *īmān* and *Dīn*.

H̲ad̲rat Mus̲lih̲ul Ummat's special affinity with rectification

I consider it necessary to note that H̲ad̲rat Mus̲lih̲ul Ummat *rah̲imahullāh* had a special affinity with enjoining good and forbidding evil – a department which is the greatest lighthouse of Islam. He used to opt for softness and affection in this regard. He used to provide the following statement of Imām Ghazzālī *rah̲imahullāh* as proof for his methodology:

وإنما الكامل من يميز مواقع الرفق عن مواقع العنف، فيعطي كل أمر حقه، فإن قاصر البصيرة أشكل عليه حكم واقعة من المواقع، فليكن ميله إلى الرفق، فإن النجح معه في الأكثر.[1]

A person of perfection is one who can distinguish between the occasions of leniency and harshness, and accord each occasion its due. As for a person who lacks insight and finds it difficult to make a clear decision [with regard to adopting leniency or

[1] إحياء العلوم، ج ٣، ص ١٨٦.

harshness], he should incline himself towards leniency because this is where success lies in most cases.

The self is generally habituated to greatness, magnificence, love and quest. The progress of the self is normally through pride and haughtiness. Therefore, the person who wants to remove the selves of people from deviation and misguidance and steer them towards rectitude and guidance, remove them from the things to which they are inclined and bring them to the great expanse of guidance, but does not mix the bitterness of the Sharīʿah with the sweetness of kindness and affection, and does not lessen the pains and hardships of the Sharīʿah with the sweetness of softness and leniency, then instead of his *daʿwah* (call, invitation) being successful, it will be a failure; and it will be more likely to be rejected than being accepted.

This can be understood from the following example: A person wants to clean his garment of an impurity. But instead of soaking it in water, he places it in the fire which burns his garment and reduced it to ash. In other words, instead of purifying his garment, he put an end to its very existence. Do you not read this instruction of Allāh *taʿālā*:

فَقُوْلَا لَهٗ قَوْلاً لَّيِّنًا لَّعَلَّهٗ يَتَذَكَّرُ أَوْ يَخْشٰى

Speak to him in a soft manner, perhaps he may become eager to accept the advice, or fear Allāh's punishment and accept. (Bayān al-Qur'ān)

We learn from the above words of Allāh *taʿālā* that soft and lenient speech is more conducive for advising and reminding, and a means of creating concern and fear. This is why Allāh *taʿālā* says:

إِنْ كُنْتُمْ تُحِبُّوْنَ اللهَ فَاتَّبِعُوْنِيْ

Say: O unbelievers! If you love Allāh, follow me [in all the external and internal Sunan (plural of Sunnah)].

We cannot be true followers of Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* unless we follow his Sunnah even in the department of enjoining good and forbidding evil.[1]

Shaykh Imām ʿUmar ibn Muhammad ibn al-ʿŪd Shāmī Hanafī explains ten etiquette of enjoining good and forbidding evil in his book, *Nisāb al-Ihtisāb*. Hadrat Muslihul Ummat *rahimahullāh* has quoted them in his valuable article, *Enjoining good and forbidding evil.* In line with our subject, we are quoting the fourth etiquette which is most beneficial and enlightening.

The task of *ihtisāb* (taking a person to account, monitoring a person's actions and then directing him) should be done with leniency and affection. It must not be done in a stern and hard-hearted manner. When Allāh *taʿālā* sent Hadrat Mūsā *ʿalayhis salām* and Hadrat Hārūn *ʿalayhis salām* to Pharaoh, He instructed them to speak to him in a soft and affectionate manner. Bearing in mind Pharaoh was a tyrant and oppressive king, they ought to think carefully before addressing him, and

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[1] مأخوذ هداية المرشد، ص ١٣١، مصنفه حضرت سيد محفوظ علي مصري.

they must select appropriate words to invite him towards Allāh *taʿālā*. Allāh *taʿālā* even taught them what to say:

فَقُلْ هَلْ لَكَ إِلَى أَنْ تَزَكَّى وَأَهْدِيَكَ إِلَى رَبِّكَ فَتَخْشَى

Then say to him: Are you desirous of being purified? And that I show you the path to your Sustainer so that you may then fear [Him]?[1]

The order to be soft and affectionate was not confined to Hadrat Mūsā *ʿalayhis salām*. It applies to everyone. Maulānā Rūm *rahimahullāh* says in this regard:

> O Mūsā! You must address the Pharaoh of your time with soft and lenient words. If you were to cast water into boiling oil, you will destroy the cauldron and the cauldron stand. You should therefore speak affectionately, but speak the truth. Do not allow any whispering in your lenient speech.

Gentleness and softness are from among the etiquette of enjoining good and forbidding evil. Most temperaments are naturally stern and harsh. If the person who is fulfilling the duty of enjoining good and forbidding evil is himself stern and harsh, the entire task will be spoilt, and most people will adopt a course of opposition and rejection. If there is anything to soften sternness and harshness, it is softness, gentleness and leniency. This is why Allāh *taʿālā* instructed us to adopt these qualities. Allāh

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[1] Sūrah an-Nāziʿāt, 79: 18-19.

taʿālā does not approve of sternness and harshness for His servants. As long as a task can be accomplished through gentleness, it should never be abandoned. There is nothing but benefit in gentleness. There is no possibility of harm in it.

I make an earnest *duʿā’* that Allāh *taʿālā* enables us to study and practise the teachings of Hadrat Muslihul Ummat *rahimahullāh*. Āmīn.

At the same time, we request all Muslims, especially those who are affiliated to Hadrat Muslihul Ummat *rahimahullāh*, to pay particular attention to this. They must study his teachings and spread them throughout the world. This is certainly not difficult for Allāh *taʿālā*.

Was salām
Muhammad Qamaruz Zamān Allāhābādī
Bayt al-Maʿārif, Bakhshī Bāzār, Allāhābād
14 Rabīʿ ath-Thānī 1427 A.H.

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May Allāh *taʿālā* accept this service and make it a means of my salvation in this world and in the Hereafter.

I request the reader to inform me of any mistakes, typographical errors, etc. in this translation. Constructive criticism and suggestions on how to improve this work are most welcome. I can be contacted via e-mail: maulanamahomedy@gmail.com

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